

Hafa Adai!

DOL still accepting applications for PUA/FPUC benefits. PAGE 2
Attao elaborates on NMTI ‘facelift project’ and Koblerville site. PAGE 6

75¢

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 124

www.saipantribune.com

THURSDAY JUNE 24, 2021

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3 snub start of JGO probe

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The first three witnesses in a House committee's investigation into Gov. Ralph DLG Torres' expenditures were a no-show yesterday, instead asking for subpoenas that would compel their presence at the hearing.

See JGO on Page 4

Taste of the Marianas is back!

AT A GLANCE

As of 7:15pm, June 23, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population **61.9%**
Fully Vaccinated: **61.9%**

Pfizer/BioNTech

Initiated:	24,391
Fully Vaccinated:	22,111

Moderna

Initiated:	4,059
Fully Vaccinated:	3,729

Janssen

Fully vaccinated:	390
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GUAM

	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	8,304	6	8,310
Recovered	8,096	2	8,098
Active	67	6	73
Deaths	139	0	139
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested	176,042		

SAIPAN

	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	183	0	183
Traced via Travel Screening	147	0	147
Traced via Community Screening	36	0	36
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested	26,131*		
Days since last community transmission	92		

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.



In her presentation during the House Committee on Ways and Means' hearing on the MVA's budget last week, MVA deputy managing director Judy Torres shared the

See TASTE on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Docomo Pacific takes pride in supporting Pride Marianas Youth's events.

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ASIA

Nearly a hundred carcasses of turtles, dolphins and a blue whale, have washed ashore in Sri Lanka.

PAGE 13



LIFE & STYLE

Walt Disney World is planning an 18-month celebration in honor of its 50th anniversary.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.



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EMAIL: editor@saipantribune.com

Local

Benavente says they're still accepting applications for PUA/FPUC benefits

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Labor Secretary Vicky Be-

navente said yesterday the CNMI Department of Labor continues to accept applications for Pandemic Unem-

ployment Assistance and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation benefits.

In response to *Saipan Tri-*

bune's request for clarification, Benavente said a PUA application is essentially also an FPUC application since earning at least \$1 in PUA will qualify an individual for \$300 in PFUC each week.

She said the PUA/FPUC paper application deadline is Sept. 7, 2021, while the online application deadline is Sept. 4, 2021.

Benavente said the deadline to submit paper applications is actually Sept. 4, but since it falls on a Saturday this year, plus the federal Labor Day holiday on Sept. 6, necessitated moving the deadline to Sept. 7. Per regulations, if the deadline falls on a Saturday or a holiday, the deadline will be automatically extended to the following business day.

At a radio news briefing last

Friday, Benavente said their PUA office at building number 1334 on Capital Hill is open from 8am to 4pm Monday through Friday to accept supporting documents in order for a PUA claimant's application to be processed. She said they can also assist with a PUA applicant with the online application if they wish.

"We are continuing to accept documents for a PUA or what we call round 2, which is under the Continued Assistance Act," she said.

She said Thursday last week marked the first anniversary when they opened the roadside intake counter at their office on Capitol Hill as a means to protect employees from the COVID-19 virus a year ago.

She said they had a smoother process this year and could

meet in person and can assist online and by telephone.

She said they are also trying to make sure any overpayment to PUA applicants is collected.

Benavente disclosed that, as of May 31, they have collected more than \$30 million in overpayment that they have retrieved from applicants who were mistakenly paid or fraudulently paid by PUA and PFUC.

Benavente said that Labor is also obligated to collect any overpayments for Lost Wages Assistance if an applicant's claim is found to be ineligible for this program.

She said in order to receive LWA, an individual has to be eligible for at least \$100 in PUA benefits during the week ending dates of August 1, 8, and 15 of 2020.

ANNOUNCEMENT



The CNMI WIC (Women, Infants and Children) Program is now accepting Vendor Applications for the islands of Saipan, Tinian, and Rota.

All interested vendors may pick up an application packet at the CNMI WIC Program's Administrative Office located on Upper Navy Hill Building # N-25, beginning June 01, 2021 through July 09, 2021; Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, or request for an application via email at fabianu@cnmiwic.org

Applications must be submitted to the CNMI WIC Program's Administrative Office no later than 4:00 p.m., July 09, 2021.

Prospective applicants are encouraged to carefully read through the information packet provided to ensure minimum qualifications are met.

Inquiries and technical questions may be directed to the Vendor Management Coordinator, Fabian M. Ulloa at (670) 664-4067 or (670) 285-4073 or by email at fabianu@cnmiwic.org.

WIC is an equal opportunity provider. The program is funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (CFDA #10.557, Federal Award Identification Number 217NMNM5W1003). The contents above are solely the responsibility of the CHCC and do not necessarily reflect the official views of United States Department of Agriculture.



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Paid for by official funds authorized by the U.S. House of Representatives.

Municipal council revives Neighborhood Watch

The 16th Saipan & Northern Islands Municipal Council has officially adopted to restore the Saipan Neighborhood Watch program as one of its immediate signature priority community projects.

This comes in view of the lifting of austerity measures, restoring the council's full operations with availability and restoration of government appropriations through the American Rescue Plan Act funding. The program was in a hiatus in 2015 during the 13th Council due to lack of funding.

The principal goal of the program is to imple-

ment a year-round community-based "Neighborhood Watch" effort by all to preserve the safety and security of all—children (famagu'on), youth (man-hobin), adults and elderly (man'amku), families, households, businesses, non-profit organizations, and public facilities—in villages throughout Saipan.

"Our goal, too, is to call upon the 22nd Legislature's support to pass a bill (and appropriate annual project funding) to dedicate this project in honor of the lives of Maleina and Faloma Quittuga Luhk, who mysteriously went missing a decade ago on May 25, 2011," said council chair Ana Demapan-Castro. "Everyone's lives and peace of mind matter."

In an effort to inform the 16th Council of the best approach forward, a series of public meetings will be held

Guam launches vaccine tourism program

HAGATNA, Guam (AP)—Guam has launched a vaccine tourism program to encourage citizens of neighboring countries and Americans living in East Asia to come get inoculated against COVID-19.

The first group of three travelers was due to arrive Wednesday on a charter flight from Taiwan, the *Pacific Daily News* reported.

Josh Tyquiengco, a spokesman for the Guam Visitors Bureau, said it was a prelude to bigger groups to come.

The "Air V&V" program is aimed at jump-starting Guam's tourism industry which has suffered from a decline in travel amid the coronavirus pandemic.

on Saipan from 5:30pm to 6:30pm to meet with, solicit input, and secure the valuable support and participation from the residents of Saipan on the program and the installation of CCTV cameras in captive areas (school bus stops, sports and recreational facilities, public parks, etc.) during interactive hours daily as a built-in deterrent.

■ June 28, 2021—Saipan Leadership Memorial Kios Ku in Chalan Kanoa (across U.S. Post Office);

■ July 13, 2021—Kagman Community Center in Kagman 3;

■ July 15, 2021—Carolinian Utt in Garapan; and

■ July 20, 2021—Tanapag Social Hall (across Sta. Remedios Church).

Input may also be sent via email to spnmunicipalcouncil@gmail.com or by calling the council office numbers at 664-2700 or 664-2701. (PR)

COVID-19 vaccination rates in places like Japan, South Korea and Taiwan have been low compared to the U.S. territory, where vaccines are easily available.

The program requires participants to pay for their quarantine hotel stay, up to a week, during which they will receive a vaccine shot on the second day. Depending on which vaccine they choose, visitors could be on island for as little as three days, or more than a month.

If they test negative at the end of their hotel quarantine, they would be allowed to leave their hotel room and enjoy the island like any other traveler.

'Defense is leading jury to believe that witness lied'

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The prosecution in the jury trial of a woman charged with child abuse over the death of a 3-year-old boy claims that the defense is leading the court to believe that one of their key witnesses fabricated her testimony.

A week in, the court has hit a roadblock in the Laniyo trial, with the court having to take a day to hear and take into account the arguments of both parties regarding the revelation of a possible inadmissible testimony made by one of the prosecution's key witnesses, a minor who lived in the home and claimed she witnessed firsthand Laniyo's abuse.



Scoggins

of a possible inadmissible testimony made by one of the prosecution's key witnesses, a minor who lived in the home and claimed she witnessed firsthand Laniyo's abuse.

The lead prosecutor in the case, Coleen St. Clair, argues that defense lawyer Mark Scoggins badgered her witness, confused her, and led the court to believe that she fabricated her testimony.

St. Clair noted that Scoggins' cross-examination was not to extract the truth but to have the jury believe that the witness had lied on the stand and that she had never mentioned the victim's split lip to police during her interview. In addition, St. Clair said, the defense went so far as to have the jury question her own credibility by implying that she knew that the statement was inadmissible evidence but used it anyway, and that she made the witness fabricate her testimony on the stand.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho called a recess at nearly 5pm

on Wednesday and said he would take the arguments into advisement. The trial resumed yesterday at 8am.

During the sixth day of the trial, Scoggins cross-examined a minor who lived with Laniyo and the 3-year-

old boy six months prior to his death, during which she said she didn't actually see the punch but, instead,

heard about it from the victim, who allegedly told her about being punched in the face when he was still alive.

The prosecution allegedly went ahead and made her testify about it in court as if she had seen it.

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2016 HYUNDAI VELOSTER • 44,202 MILES • STK: 20H068-A • KBB: \$15,830 \$13,995 <small>Sale Price</small>	2017 HONDA HRV LX • 39,686 MILES • STK: 18P317A • KBB: \$17,453 \$16,995 <small>Sale Price</small>	2018 MITSUBISHI OUTLANDER SPORT • 12,549 MILES • STK: 8M029D • KBB: \$19,751 \$19,995 <small>Sale Price</small>
2018 KIA FORTE HATCHBACK • 10,564 MILES • STK: 18HS916 • KBB: \$15,477 \$14,995 <small>Sale Price</small>	2018 KIA OPTIMA LX • 10,367 MILES • STK: 18HS925C • KBB: \$19,930 \$17,995 <small>Sale Price</small>	2018 HONDA CIVIC EXT • 10,120 MILES • STK: 18HS935 • KBB: \$22,425 \$19,995 <small>Sale Price</small>
2017 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT • 31,313 MILES • STK: 20M094A • KBB: \$14,967 \$13,995 <small>Sale Price</small>	2017 MAZDA MAZDA3 TOURING H/B • 21,120 MILES • STK: 20D013A • KBB: \$17,801 \$17,995 <small>Sale Price</small>	2011 TOYOTA 4RUNNER • 77,762 MILES • STK: 11P314 • KBB: \$21,336 \$19,995 <small>Sale Price</small>
2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT • 10,153 MILES • STK: 18HS905 • KBB: \$19,496 \$14,995 <small>Sale Price</small>	2015 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER LE • 32,301 MILES • STK: 5HS735A • KBB: \$19,031 \$17,995 <small>Sale Price</small>	2019 MAZDA CX-5 GT AWD • 8,214 MILES • STK: 19P299 • KBB: \$28,460 \$26,995 <small>Sale Price</small>
2016 HYUNDAI TUCSON GL • 47,963 MILES • STK: M006A • KBB: \$15,395 \$14,995 <small>Sale Price</small>	2020 HYUNDAI ELANTRA SPORT • 4,180 MILES • STK: 20P307 • KBB: \$21,326 \$18,995 <small>Sale Price</small>	2020 MAZDA CX-9 SIGNATURE AWD • 5,641 MILES • STK: 20D027D • KBB: \$43,854 \$41,995 <small>Sale Price</small>

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Woman claims bugs in quarantine site beds

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A 71-year-old woman who is undergoing mandatory quarantine for arriving passengers at Mariana Resort & Spa, is upset about her accommodation, saying the mattress she had slept on for two nights was old, severely damaged, and infested with bugs.

JGO

From Page 1

The three—Police Officer 1 Jomelyn S. Gelacio, special assistant for Administration Mathilda A. Rosario, and the Department of Finance's finance and accounting director Bernadita C. Palacios—wrote separate but identical letters to Rep. Celina R. Babauta (D-Saipan), who chairs the House Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee, asking her to issue a subpoena for their attendance at the hearing.

Gelacio was previously assigned as security detail for first lady Diana Torres.

All seven JGO Committee members, including Rep. Blas Jonathan Attao (R-Saipan), approved Rep. Christina E. Sablan's (D-Saipan) motion to skip the 1309 letters that the JGO Committee earlier issued for Gelacio, Rosario, and Palacios, and instead issue subpoenas to all the potential witnesses that will be called before the committee. Letter 1309 in the Commonwealth Code refers

Staff of the COVID-19 Task Force, which has responsibility over the quarantine site, have since helped Susana Blas-Deleon Guerrero move into one of the resort's separate, private bungalows, where she will continue the rest of her quarantine.

Deleon Guerrero told *Saipan Tribune* that she began her quarantine last Monday but it was only yesterday, Wednesday, when she woke up with

to the acquisition of information by other lawful means.

Babauta said they will issue subpoenas to Gelacio, Rosario, and Palacios for them to appear before the committee on the fifth day after they have received the subpoena.

Gelacio, Rosario, and Palacios told Babauta in their letters dated Tuesday that Babauta's request for testimony dated June 17 was not a subpoena, that although Babauta's letter is on her official House of Representatives letterhead, it is merely a letter without the effects of the laws that she cited.

Gelacio, Rosario, and Palacios said that in order to preserve their rights pursuant to all laws, they are requesting that the committee to issue a subpoena for their attendance at the hearing. They said the subpoena should provide sufficient notice of the hearing date, time, and place.

In addition, the three said the subpoena should provide them with a "general statement of the subject matter of the committee's investigation or inquiry" to ensure they can prepare properly and adequately for

what she said was pain on her right leg. "My right leg looked like a shark bit me," she said over the phone.

She then called the front desk, and asked for people to come by and change her bedsheets and pillows. The front desk supposedly told Deleon Guerrero that they will provide her with new sheets and pillows, but said that she needed to change her pillows and bedsheets herself. "I can't!"

their testimony.

Gelacio, Rosario, and Palacios also invoked their right to have a lawyer present with them at the hearing. They said they have requested the Office of the Attorney General for legal representation but have been advised that they will need to find private counsel to represent them. The three said the OAG advised them of their rights to be paid by the CNMI government for hiring private counsel.

They requested 30 days from their June 22 letter to ensure the contract with their attorneys goes through the required process for approval.

The three said once the contract of their attorneys is approved, they will advise the JGO of the names of their respective lawyers and authorize communication on their behalf.

At the start of the hearing, Babauta disclosed that she received a copy of the three witnesses' letters while they were in their delegation session yesterday morning.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

such as the Rota Coconut Festival and Bisita Luta.

Torres said although they continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and follow the advice of the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. and the COVID-19 Task Force in terms of social gatherings, there are a number of events that are already anticipated to be held next year. She said other events on their list may be confirmed as they move forward.

As for the Hafa Adai Tirow Pledge program launched last month by the MVA and the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, Torres said the vision is to develop, promote, and support the Hafa Adai Tirow spirit in the Marianas by promoting the indigenous

The nine firefighters—Paul T. Acebedo, Jose K. Angui, Allen T. Calvo, Cain C. Castro, Argernon A. Flores, Derek B. Gersonde, Shawn DLR Kaipat, Philip M. Kalen, and Adam J. Safer—asked the CNMI Superior Court for an order reinstating them to their previous jobs until a decision is reached in their lawsuit.

In the filed motion for a preliminary injunction, Horey said his clients have a strong likelihood of success on the merits, particularly on the issues of individual privacy and procedural due process because the law speaks clearly and emphatically in their favor.

Horey said his clients are suffering irreparable harm in the denial of their constitutional rights, and it is in the public interest that these rights not be infringed.

The plaintiffs, he added, have al-

Chamorro and Carolinian cultures.

She said this program is open to business organizations and individuals willing to take the action to preserve, protect, and promote CNMI's indigenous cultures in the areas of language, art, tradition, history, and values.

For example, Torres said, a company may pledge to answer the phone with Hafa Adai Tirow or display local artwork at their office or serve local snacks such as apigigi and other local foods and, at the same time, educate the employees about local history.

"This is a very exciting program and we hope you will take the pledge," she told House members.

ready proposed numerous ways in which the public health and safety can be protected without requiring their vaccinations, primarily by assigning them to duties within the department where public contact is unnecessary.

Horey added that there is surely some room somewhere in the government for unvaccinated persons to work safely, since the policy itself anticipates making room for those with religious or medical objections to the vaccine. "All [the] plaintiffs ask is that the same room be made available to them," he said.

Their lawsuit, which was filed two weeks ago, asks the court to issue an order declaring that the terminations of the nine firefighters were invalid and unlawful, and to set the terminations aside.

I'm 71 years old, [and] I can't bend down because I have muscle spasms. Somebody has to come here and help me," said Deleon Guerrero.

According to her, the front desk did agree to send people to her room to either help her change her beddings or switch rooms. In the meantime, she removed the bed sheets and saw just how old, damaged, and bug-infested the mattress she had slept on was. "Look at that! I slept on this thing for two nights, I got up because something was biting me, and right now maybe one of the things that bit me is inside my skin. I'm not exaggerating," said Deleon Guerrero.

Staff of the COVID-19 Task Force, which runs the quarantine sites, helped move Deleon Guerrero to a bungalow soon after, where she currently stays.

Saipan Tribune tried to obtain comments from task force chair Warren Villagomez last night but he had yet to respond as of press time.

Deleon Guerrero assured that her complaints about the quarantine site are not politically motivated. She named several Democratic and Republican lawmakers whom she called and shared pictures with before calling *Saipan Tribune*, with one lawmaker advising her to talk to the media instead of posting it on social media.

As to how arriving travelers are transported from the airport to Mariana Resort, Deleon Guerrero has no complaints. "Everything was great from arrival on Monday morning. The task force was awesome. They were quick and helpful all the way to Mariana Resort," she said.

that once the slowdown of COVID ends, they're really looking forward to how we can help them come and visit the Marianas," she said.

Iakopo said in addition to that, Deer Meat for Dinner was a U.S. media familiarization tour that was targeting the U.S. market. "It's important for us to expand. We cannot depend on just Japan, Korea, and China," she pointed out.

Propst said there was nothing to restrict anybody from coming here to visit if they're Americans. "Did anybody come out after that trip to this day because of those videos?" he asked.

Iakopo replied no one came because even at that time there was no COVID-19 vaccines, and nobody knew anything about the COVID situation.

When he asked Iakopo if she is going to support a similar venture in the future, MVA board chair Viola Alepuyo responded, saying every fam tour that's presented to MVA is brought to the board for approval.

Alepuyo said when the situation arises, a request is made, then the board will entertain that request and make a decision. "I think that it's unfair for Miss Iakopo to be put on the spot to make [her] respond to your question because she does not have the authority to approve it," the chair told Propst.

Alepuyo said that when a request is made to the MVA board, that request is vetted or scrutinized like all other requests, and the decision will be made.

Then-MVA chair Marian Aldan-Pierce stated last year that the money that MVA spent for what Arrington had been producing "is a drop in the bucket." She said the quality of the footage is great and it showcases not just the unique qualities of the islands Arrington has visited but how fun off-the-grid living is and can be.

She said although she does not anticipate an immediate increase in tourism to the Northern Islands, these footages will act as a teaser.

Aldan-Pierce said it's unfortunate that the promotion has received some negative attention instead of people looking at the positive contribution that the promotion could have.

Arrington's YouTube channel, Deer Meat for Dinner, has 850,000 subscribers. It is popular among hunters, fishermen, and other people who love off-the-grid adventures.

TASTE

From Page 1

good news that the Taste of the Marianas will be back on Aug. 27 and 28.

The Taste of the Marianas, which is traditionally held in May, was canceled last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Starting last Friday, the CNMI has been downgraded to Level Green, which is the safest level in the five-color Community Vulnerability risk scale. Red, as the highest, is the least safe level.

Torres said there are also a number of events that are organized by other agencies that MVA supports,

WE'RE

From Page 1

is an order prohibiting an action, but in this case reversing an action and reinstating the nine, to preserve the status quo while the court decides on the lawsuit.

"We're looking forward to the court's decision. We're just trying to get these guys back to work. We have no expectations right now because the judge isn't getting into any of the issues until the next hearing," he said.

Superior Court Associate Judge Joseph Camacho scheduled the hearing for the preliminary injunction on July 6. He also instructed the government to file its opposition, if any, by June 28 and the defense was given until July 2 to respond.

The nine firefighters—Paul T. Acebedo, Jose K. Angui, Allen T. Calvo, Cain C. Castro, Argernon A.

Flores, Derek B. Gersonde, Shawn DLR Kaipat, Philip M. Kalen, and Adam J. Safer—asked the CNMI Superior Court for an order reinstating them to their previous jobs until a decision is reached in their lawsuit.

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ready proposed numerous ways in which the public health and safety can be protected without requiring their vaccinations, primarily by assigning them to duties within the department where public contact is unnecessary.

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Their lawsuit, which was filed two weeks ago, asks the court to issue an order declaring that the terminations of the nine firefighters were invalid and unlawful, and to set the terminations aside.

She said they did receive inquiries from professionals and business investors after the Northern Islands videos aired. "And they also mentioned

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Attao elaborates on NMTI ‘facelift project’ and Koblerville site

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With many short- and long-term improvements for the Northern Marianas Technical Institute that are now in the pipeline, interim chief executive officer Jodina Attao is hoping the revitalized NMTI will leave an impact on future students and she plans to provide opportunities for alumni that want to give back.

“I’m hoping that students who get certified here in the future come back wanting to be instructors. . .[We want them] to have the opportunity to pass on the knowledge that they gained from us,” said Attao.

Essential to this is what Attao describes as a “facelift project” for NMTI, going into detail about her plans to reori-



ent the Lower Base facility so that instructional classrooms are closer to workshops, the building of an NMTI facility in Koblerville, and other plans. At its core, Attao said the main purpose of the “facelift

project” is to create a school that future trade students would be proud of going to. “The facelift project is to help us entice enrollees to come in and register with us. If I was going to a school, I’d want

to be proud of where I came from,” said Attao.

She explained Tuesday that part of her long-term goals for the trade school is to move classrooms closer to their

JOSHUA SANTOS
Northern Marianas Technical Institute interim CEO Jodina Attao walks *Saipan Tribune* through a whiteboard where portions of her “facelift project” for NMTI are written at NMTI’s current location in Lower Base.

workshops within its Lower Base facility. “The ultimate goal is to get our classrooms tied to their specific workshops so that it’s easier to transition from instructional learning to worksite learning,” said Attao. She and NMTI staff expect to get this done before NMTI reopens for students on Aug. 18.

As for other long-term plans, Attao said that construction work for NMTI’s Koblerville location will take two to three years before completion, and

the current plan is to move the trade school’s administrative offices to the new site. Attao said she wants both NMTI facilities to be operating but to retain the Lower Base facility as the trade school’s main campus. Funding for the construction of the Koblerville building will be funded through the \$10.3 million that the U.S. Department of Commerce’s Economic Development Administration gave NMTI on Feb. 18 this year.

Attao promises to maintain transparency between her and the public in the long-term. “I’m very transparent with public information because that’s the way I want to operate. If [anyone] has a question, I [am] open and honest in answering it,” said Attao.

NMTI hosting summer program for TMS students

The Northern Marianas Technical Institute will be hosting a summer program for Tanapag Middle School’s Career and Technical Education students from June 28 to Aug. 2.

The five-week program will give the students exposure to entry-level construction, welding, culinary, automotive, and electronic work with the hopes that they pursue a trade profession in the future.

As of press time Tuesday, NMTI interim chief executive officer Jodina Attao said the number of summer program participants is looking to be between 30 to 50 students.

According to Attao, renovating and beautifying NMTI facilities has short and long-term components. In preparation for the summer program, Attao and NMTI staff have been working to convert a conference room into a “think tank,” decorating certain hallways with paintings, posting multiple safety signs in clear places, and doing general renovations all before this Friday.

As for her expectations for this year’s summer program, Attao hopes the students walk away from the program at least beginning to consider the

possibility of pursuing a trade. “We want students, teachers, and parents to be able to see the outcome of the program. This is an opportunity for students to learn whether they want to be in the trades or go an academic route. Exposing kids [to the trades] at a young age can totally help develop that mindset,” said Attao.

Also according to Attao, the summer program was made possible through NMTI’s partnership with the CNMI Public School System and through working closely with PSS’ Dr. Jessica Taylor. **(Joshua Santos)**



Faith, Hope and
KARIDAT
Catholic Charities - Diocese of Chalan Kanoa

Request for Proposal for Hardscaping

Karidat Social Services is soliciting competitive sealed proposals to perform hardscaping repairs at the Sister Remedios Community Center in Chalan Kanoa. The proposal must be submitted to Karidat’s office at Sister Remedios Community Center, 3119 Chalan Kanoa Street, Chalan Kanoa Village, Saipan or mailed to Karidat Social Services; P.O. Box 501058, Saipan, MP 96950 by July 23, 2021 at 4:00 pm.

I. Contents of Proposal:

- A. Title Page Containing
 - 1. RFP Subject
 - 2. Name of the Firm
 - 3. Local Address
 - 4. Telephone Number(s)
 - 5. Email address
 - 6. Name of contact person
 - 7. Submission date

II. Transmittal Letter:

- A. A brief statement of your understanding of the work to be performed and an affirmative statement to perform work within the time period stipulated.
- B. State all inclusive fees for which the hardscaping will be performed.

III. Firm Profile:

Provide a brief description of your firm’s personnel education background and experience, number of staff, staff level (partner, manager, supervisor, etc.) and listing of clients serviced.

IV. Proposal Evaluation Criteria: The proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the following hardscaping criteria.

Responsiveness of the proposal in clearly stating understanding of the work to be performed.

1. Hardscaping coverage

- A. Remove and replace 725 LF of Chain Link Fence 5 FT high with 2 FT Concrete block Retaining wall, fence posts are 2.5 IN DIA 10.5 FT centers with 2.5 IN DIA contiguous top rails.
- B. Remove and replace 800 LF of Chain Link Fencing, Fence is 6 FT high with 2 FT concrete block retaining wall, fence posts are 2.5 IN DIA on 10.5 FT centers with 2.5 IN DIA contiguous top rails.
- C. Remove and replace Flag Pole, 1 each Flag Pole, 22.5 LF.
- D. Replace 1 each Wooden Playground equipment with a rock wall, tube slide, regular slide and tower.

Project Notes: The fencing is perimeter fencing for the facility, not a stand-alone fence. The GPS per the SIR for the perimeter fence is: LAT: 15.1482050, LONG: 145.7031512.

2. Overall estimates as well as the time estimates for each major section of the work to be performed.

- B. Qualifications and experience of the firm
 - 1. Size and structure of the firm
 - 2. Ability to maintain continuity of project
 - 3. Experience of the firm
- C. Qualification and experience of staff to be assigned: education, position in the firm, number of years, and types of experience will be considered
 - 1. Supervision to be exercised over the construction team
- D. Contractor will be responsible for acquiring all required permits such as but not limited to: Historic Preservation and Zoning Permits.

V. Hardscaping Administration Matters:

- A. Hardscaping Planning meetings, interim conferences and exit conference may be attended by the following officials
 - 1. Karidat’s Board of Directors, the Executive Director and the Administrative Officer, FEMA Representatives, CNMI Public Assistance Office Representatives.
- B. Karidat will issue the Contract Award on July 30, 2021.
- C. The hardscaping field work must be completed in 30 days of notice to proceed.

VI. Confidentiality of Hardscaping Proposals:

All hardscaping proposals will be reviewed in a confidential manner. Proposals must be labeled “CONFIDENTIAL” and transmitted to the Executive Director, Karidat Social Services, P.O. Box 501058, Saipan, MP 96950. It may also be hand delivered to Karidat’s Office located at the Sister Remedios Community Center, 3119 Chalan Kanoa Street, Chalan Kanoa Village, Saipan.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Water service interruption today in Chalan Kanoa

There will be an emergency water service interruption today, June 24, 2021, from 8:30am to 4:30pm, for Commonwealth Utilities Corp. customers along Anita Avenue in Chalan Kanoa.

A waterline leak was identified Tuesday afternoon on Anita Avenue and water was temporarily shut off at 2pm at that time to minimize water loss but was turned back on at 2pm yesterday. The emergency water service interruption today is to isolate an 8-inch waterline on Anita Avenue for our operators to perform the leak repair. Water services will resume soon after.

For the safety of the men and women at the jobsite, CUC advises the public to exercise caution or take alternative routes.

For more information, contact the CUC Customer Hotline at 236-4333 or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). **(PR)**

Emergency water service interruption in As Matuus, San Roque, Achugao, Tanapag

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. implemented an emergency water service interruption yesterday for customers in the following areas: As Matuus, San Roque, Achugao and Tanapag due to the isolation of an 8-inch mainline leak located on Mamate Loop in San Roque for water operators to perform the leak repair.

Water service resumed yesterday but the following water scheduled hours will remain in effect for the customers in As Matuus, San Roque, Achugao and Tanapag areas:

- Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 6am to 6pm
- Tuesday, Thursday, Saturday and Sunday: 24-hours

For more information, contact the CUC Hotline (236-4333) or monitor our Facebook page for the latest updates (<https://www.facebook.com/CommonwealthUtilitiesCorporation/>). **(PR)**

SHEFA fall deadline set

The Saipan Higher Education Financial Assistance has set the submission deadline for fall 2021 “application only” on July 1, 2021, Thursday. **(PR)**

4.2-magnitude quake in Pagan area

At 2:03pm on June 23, 2021, a report of a 4.2-magnitude earthquake occurred 18.583°N 145.545°E of Pagan in the Northern Marianas Islands. Currently there are no tsunami warnings, or advisories that were issued by the Pacific Tsunami Warning Center. For more information, contact the EOC CNMI State Warning Point at 237-8000. **(PR)**

CHamoru commission meeting set

The Kumision i Fino’ CHamoru yan i Fina’nå’guen i Historia yan i Lina’la’ i Taotao Tåno’ (Commission on CHamoru Language and the Teaching of the History and Culture of the Indigenous People of Guam) will hold its first July monthly virtual meeting on July 1, 2021, Thursday, from 12:30pm to 3:30pm on a Zoom link. Call Kumision secretary Roland Blas for Zoom link information, special accommodations and agenda (rblaskumision@gmail.com) at 480-4047. **(PR)**

SDA Clinic holds outreach in the midst of the pandemic



Saipan Seventh-day Adventist Dental Clinic's friendly staff meet the community at the Clinic with a Heart outreach on May 28 this year.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

COVID-19 put the brakes on Saipan Seventh-day Adventist Dental Clinic's annual community outreach in 2020. However, it did not dampen the staff's goodwill and creativity in holding Clinic with a Heart on May 28 this year.

pens, and tracts handed out by staff volunteers. Three hundred gift kits were all gone in a couple of hours. Those that showed up afterward were offered bottled water.

Rachel Ann Masga, this year's event coordinator, pointed out that Clinic with a Heart shows the clinic's generosity and love for the community. "It is obvious that the community appreciates that we can give back, even during the worldwide pandemic," according to Masga. "I hope we can provide more than 300 bags next time."

Clinic director Dr. Warren Creed is hopeful regular outreach services will be offered to the community again when the pandemic is over. "We have been serving the community here for many years and there is a great need for us to reach out and help our community

as we are able. With the social distancing due to COVID, we have not been able to offer our traditional services, but we are able to provide the community with the oral hygiene kits," said Creed.

The Saipan SDA Dental Clinic provides dental services to uninsured individuals in the Saipan community twice a year. Services provided include deep or therapeutic cleanings, gum therapy, fillings and extractions, as well

as giving away antibiotics and medicines. Every first Friday of February, Give Kids a Smile is held for children who do not have Medicaid or other dental insurance. Clinic with a Heart, which caters to adults, is conducted on the Sunday of Memorial

weekend. Clinic with a Heart started about 15 years ago.

Friday's turnout demonstrates the public awareness of the Adventist Clinic's presence in the community. It also shows that our services go beyond the corners of the dental chair. (*Jocelyn Sonsona*)

**DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**Request for Proposals
RFP NO.: RFQ21-GOV-109**

SUBMISSION DATE: JULY 06, 2021 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"Request for Qualifications for Provision of Architect/Engineering Services – Garapan Revitalization Project Management Services"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT, OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR, JUAN A. SABLAN BUILDING, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****FOR YOUR SAFETY & OURS: ALL INTERESTED INDIVIDUALS ARE REQUIRED TO USE A FACE MASK & ARE REQUIRED TO REGISTER UPON ENTRY****

ALL QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS RFP MUST BE SUBMITTED VIA-EMAIL TO MR. CHRIS A. CONCEPCION AT chris.concepcion@opd.gov.mp,

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAIC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ CHRISTOPHER A. CONCEPCION
DEPUTY DIRECTOR** **/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, P&S**

**DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT**

**INVITATION TO BID
ITB NO.: RFQ21-JUDICIARY-101**

SUBMISSION DATE: JULY 16, 2021 TIME: 09:00 A.M.

"REPAIR OF DAMAGE AND/OR DETERIORATED CONCRETE WALL AND TRIMS FOR THE GUMA' HUSTRIA. A PROJECT UNDER THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE, OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY"

COPIES OF THE SPECIFICATIONS MAY BE OBTAINED AT THE OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY, LOCATED AT THE FORMER EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT OFFICE, ASCENCION DRIVE, BUILDING NO. 1301, CAPITOL HILL, SAIPAN, DURING REGULAR WORKING HOURS.

****MUST USE A FACE MASK BEFORE ENTERING THE OFFICE****

A MANDATORY PRE-BID MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR 09:00 A.M., LOCAL TIME, JUNE 24, 2021 AT THE GUMA' HUSTRIA ASSEMBLY MALL.

QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS ITB SHALL BE DIRECTED TO **MR. GERALD WEAVER, BUILDING SUPERINTENDENT**, VIA EMAIL TO gerald.weaver@nmijudiciary.com ON OR BEFORE THE **CLOSE OF BUSINESS, July 01, 2021**. ALL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SHALL BE SHARED WITH ALL BIDDERS.

THE PROVISIONS OF THE CNMI PROCUREMENT REGULATIONS, NMIAIC SECTION 70-30.3-725 AND 70-30.3-730 PROHIBITING GRATUITIES, KICKBACKS AND CONTINGENT FEES SHALL APPLY.

THE CNMI GOVERNMENT RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY OR ALL BIDS, OR PORTIONS THEREOF, AND WAIVE IMMATERIAL DEFECTS IF TO DO SO WOULD BE IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CNMI GOVERNMENT.

**/S/ DAVID DLG. ATALIG
SECRETARY OF FINANCE** **/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS**

**/S/ ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO
CHIEF OF JUSTICE**

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THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 124

Published daily at 2/F JP Center,
Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, CNMI
Mailing Address: PMB 34, Box 10001, Saipan, MP, 96950

Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Beijing is learning how capitalists react to oppression

Companies are leaving Hong Kong now that China has ramped up its oppression. Go figure.

Ever since its transfer from the United Kingdom to China in 1997, Hong Kong has billed itself as a bridge between East and West, a capitalist gateway to the world's second largest economy. But as China has upended Hong Kong's autonomy and cracked down on free speech, companies are less inclined to invest there.

Last month, the American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong released the results of a survey of its members. Of the 325 companies who responded to the poll, 42% said they were considering or planning to leave the city. According to data compiled by the real estate firm Cushman & Wakefield, Hong Kong now faces the highest rate of commercial real estate vacancies in 15 years.

Residents are following businesses out of town. Hong Kong's population of about 7.5 million shrank by 46,500 in 2020, according to reporting by The Wall Street Journal.

It's not hard to see why. On Thursday, 500 police officers stormed the newsroom of Apple Daily, a leading Hong Kong newspaper. They arrested executives and editors, accusing them of colluding with foreign forces. Western media captured photos of journalists in handcuffs being escorted away.

Less than two weeks before that, on the 32nd anniversary of the Tiananmen Square massacre, police blocked off Victoria Park, the site of an annual vigil marking the event that attracts thousands of people. The world was treated to photos of a blank, brightly lit park where crowded commemoration should have been.

These scenes are stark and intentional. Beijing continues to oppose free markets and free people, removing symbols of each from public view.

And now, China is reaping the whirlwind.

There is something to note here for Beijing: When you manipulate markets, stifle dissent and oppress citizens, don't be surprised when your business sector looks as empty as Victoria Park.

The companies leaving Hong Kong may be doing so as a political statement. That's one we could support. But such philosophical notions as democracy and human rights might not even factor into some of these moves. Some may be leaving simply because they understand the basic truth that freedom is good for business. That's a truth Beijing should embrace.

There is also something to note here for Washington: As China turns more toward oppressing its people and spreading its influence across the globe, the Biden administration along with Congress and the business community—including firms based here in Texas—shouldn't be neutral actors. Protecting and expanding human freedom should be an avowed goal of the U.S. government and it should show up in policies ranging from sanctions imposed on oppressive regimes to initiatives aimed at expanding free markets. To the extent that Washington succeeds at securing unfettered commerce, the business community in America and Texas will thrive.

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4 developments in cancer treatment worth celebrating

When it comes to health breakthroughs, COVID-19 vaccines have received the lion's share of recent attention—and rightly so, as they are key to ending a global pandemic that has killed millions and disrupted the lives of almost everyone on the planet. But there have also been big advancements in the field of cancer treatments. The American Society of Clinical Oncology held its annual meeting earlier this month, giving drugmakers and researchers the chance to share their findings on the latest developments in cancer research and drug research. There was much to celebrate. Here are four particularly promising takeaways:

Earlier-stage treatments

Immuno-oncology (IO) drugs, which awaken patient immune cells to hunt down tumors, have proved capable of fighting multiple types of cancers and are among the industry's biggest blockbusters. They've been mostly used in late-stage cancers, limiting their potential. Earlier use as so-called adjuvant therapy after surgery to catch stray tumor cells and prevent cancer from coming back has been seen as a huge opportunity because the body-spanning immune system is the perfect tool. Until now, it had only worked in melanoma, a relatively low bar because skin cancer has proved especially vulnerable to IO drugs. New data presented at ASCO finally confirmed the theory in other types of cancer. A year's adjuvant treatment of lung cancer patients with Roche Holding AG's IO flagship Tecentriq cut the risk of death by 21% relative to a placebo and left a higher proportion of patients disease-free after three years compared with the regular standard of care. There are many other adjuvant trials in progress, which will hopefully generate similar results.

Expanding immuno-oncology drugs

The revolution in treating cancer with IO drugs has faced one big obstacle: tumor cells use multiple mechanisms to evade the immune system. The most successful IO drugs, such as Merck & Co.'s Keytruda and Bristol Myers Squibb Co.'s Opdivo interfere with the action of PD-1, an "off switch" on immune T-cells. This is the part of the mechanism that the body uses to stop the immune system from attacking normal cells. But many cancers don't respond, so the holy grail of IO has been to deactivate these other immune-evading defenses to help more patients. Bristol's Yervoy is partnered with Opdivo to treat melanoma and some lung cancers, but it has high toxicity. At ASCO we saw data for Opdivo plus relatlimab, an antibody that blocks Lag-3, another T-cell off switch. The trial showed very similar efficacy to Op-

By SAM FAZELI

Bloomberg Opinion

Sam Fazeli is senior pharmaceuticals analyst for Bloomberg Intelligence and director of research for EMEA.



divo and Yervoy, but with far fewer side effects, which should help more patients use the combo.

Better 'me-too' drugs

In the 1980s and 1990s, the pharmaceutical industry spent a lot of effort and money developing "me-too" knockoffs of rivals' successful treatments with little differentiation on efficacy or tolerability. What we are seeing now is a more sophisticated approach to developing better versions of existing drugs. The best example of this is AstraZeneca's Calquence for a form of leukemia called CLL. Competing with AbbVie Inc. and Johnson & Johnson's \$9.4 billion-a-year blockbuster Imbruvica, Calquence was just as effective, but with a much better side-effect profile, data at the ASCO conference showed.

Tackling costs, with Chinese help

While the above advances are excellent news, there is of course the problem of cost. Just treating lung-cancer patients with IO drugs after surgery could cost \$8 billion a year for the medicines alone. This is where biotechnology startup EQRx comes in. Launched in January, the company aims to address the high cost of drugs by leveraging innovation in China, which has experienced a surge in its biotech sector. EQRx has licensed cancer drugs from Chinese companies that have developed and conducted cheaper clinical trials at home. An example is the drug aumolertinib, with data at ASCO that suggested it may be as good as Astra's blockbuster lung cancer drug Tagrisso. EQRx's ultimate aim is to bring the drug to the U.S. and European markets at a substantial discount to Astra's treatment.

The cancer treatment revolution rolls on. The key to getting the most out of breakthroughs is getting costs low enough that people can actually afford to benefit from them without damaging the incentive for drugmakers to spend heavily to develop even more effective treatments. It's a tricky balance that we haven't yet achieved with our current imperfect system. But there is still progress, and that's worth cheering.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

VIEWPOINTS

Bipartisanship, the broccoli of politics

Bipartisanship is the broccoli of politics. Everyone knows it's good for us, but few of us love it.

When I was elected to Congress in 2010 I became a member of the new House majority, facing a Democratic majority in the Senate and the Obama administration in the executive branch. The only way to pass legislation was through bipartisanship.

In the summer of 2011, Republicans who had been elected in the tea party wave were sorely challenged when it became necessary to raise the ceiling on the national debt. The very idea of countenancing, let alone authorizing, an even more massive burden on American taxpayers, and on successive generations without a vote to weigh in on this depredation against them, was repugnant.

Many of us, including me, had inveighed vehemently in the public record against raising the debt ceiling, and even vowed (ignorance is bliss!) to vote against so doing. But the heady days of campaigning against the leftward juggernaut of the first two Obama years were long over, and, as the grayer (no wonder!) heads advised us, we were now obligated to govern.

The relatively small number of House Republicans who represented swing districts were in the best political position, given the composition of our constituencies, to work across the aisle. Mine was one of those districts.

With superb assistance by my legislative team, I hosted a briefing for fellow members to lay out the potentially devastating consequences of even a technical default. We became acquainted with the tough reality that ending the spiral of profligate spending and confiscatory taxation would require finesse and patience—and bipartisanship.

Enough of us came around to pass the package negotiated by teams from the House and Senate majorities and the White House, but not before a contingent of Republicans most adamantine about their tea party pledges sent everyone back to the drawing board and engendered a last-minute cliffhanger vote that gave us the “sequester” of domestic (a GOP condition) and military (a Democratic condition) expenditures that has vexed both sides ever since.

That, of course, is the essence of compromise, in the immortal words of then-Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid: “No one got what they wanted, and I always find ... if people walk out of the room and parties are all dissatisfied, that’s a pretty good settlement.”

In my own frequent, and not infrequently heated, discussions of the debt-ceiling deal, I urged the word “cooperation” be used as an alternative to “compromise,” because in the latter case everyone loses, but in the former everyone wins.

The vogue for positive thinking about bipartisanship that I hoped this reasoning might

inspire failed, sadly, to materialize. It’s the gastronomy of politics: If you go into an election envisioning cake and ice cream, getting broccoli instead feels like a letdown.

Today the palatability of bipartisan compromise—cooperation!—is being contemplated afresh, this time by Democrats on whose side the ascendant energy is for radical transformation of our election system, our economy, our energy portfolio and our courts.

And, as in the 2011 debt-ceiling crisis,

By NAN HAYWORTH

InsideSources.com

Nan Hayworth is a former congresswoman for New York's 19th Congressional District. She is a member of the board of directors at Independent Women's Forum. She wrote this for InsideSources.com.



it falls on those members of Congress and senators whose districts and states are most politically balanced to lead the way forward, with smaller and more gradual steps than their respective parties aspire to take.

While it's true that bipartisan politicians tend to have a particular type of resilience, namely a tolerance for “friendly” (or less so) fire from their own side, their existence and survival depend almost entirely on who's electing them. West Virginia Sen. Joe Manchin, the Democrat who has become the de facto leader of the bipartisan coalition on Capitol Hill, represents one of the most Republican states in the country, and that, more than anything else, is what stiffens his spine against his party's leftward lean.

The relevance of the political composition of constituencies acquires extra prominence every 10 years, when congressional district lines are redrawn according to census results. A combination of advancing polarization and gerrymandering, an impulse to which both sides of the political spectrum have understandably yielded, has decimated the bipartisan species over the past couple of decades—though efforts to curb gerrymandering via “nonpartisan” (this, as does beauty, obtains in the eye of the beholder) vehicles in various states may temper this decline.

We're in the midst of a redistricting cycle now, and its implications for Washington's behavior will be known in 2022. In the meantime, a nation whose dessert preference is evenly divided would be well-advised to develop an appreciation for the healthy benefits of broccoli.

Bipartisanship isn't dead; it just takes political courage

President Joe Biden promised a new era of bipartisanship when he was elected, telling media in December that “the nation's looking for us to be united, much more united.” As any plain observer of the nation's politics can see, partisan tensions are still sky high.

Bipartisanship isn't quite dead yet, but a major way that both parties could earn voters' trust is if they worked together to tackle soaring federal debt and deficits. This may seem counterintuitive, given that the Biden administration has been pointing to strong support in public polls for its big-spending plans. But record levels of federal spending and the budget deficit remain of great concern to voters, and that fact hasn't changed for a decade.

Gallup most recently reported that nearly half of voters worry a “great deal” about federal spending and the budget deficit. An additional 28 percent worry a “fair amount,” meaning more than three-quarters of voters are at least somewhat worried. These numbers are down from the public worry in 2011 (when 87 percent were worried a “great deal” or a “fair amount”) but are high enough that lawmakers should care.

It would be great if lawmakers started by tackling unsustainable growth in mandatory spending (including big-ticket programs like Medicare and Social Security), which makes up 66 percent of total federal spending in the current fiscal year. These programs are major drivers of spending growth and could be disproportionately responsible for any future debt crisis the nation faces.

Absent a grand bargain on entitlement reform, though, lawmakers must seek smaller but meaningful compromises to reduce the discretionary spending pie that Congress controls. The place to start is the Department of Defense budget.

Why? Defense is the largest single part of the discretionary federal budget, coming in at \$715 billion authorized by Congress in the previous fiscal year. Military spending typically makes up more than half of the discretionary budget passed by Congress and is projected to rise to more than \$900 billion per year by the end of the decade. And, as is typical with the federal government, military spending is rife with waste, inefficiency and improper allocation of resources.

It's hard to believe, but responsible and

meaningful reductions to the military budget were once a bipartisan venture. President Ronald Reagan presided over real military cuts in four of the eight years of his presidency. In 1985 and 1986, Reagan and a divided Congress worked together to enact significant defense cuts of 3.8 percent and 3.1 percent respectively (adjusted for inflation), with wide bipartisan margins. The following two years, they agreed to additional, if more modest, cuts.

If Biden and Congress did now exactly

By ANDREW LAUTZ

InsideSources.com

Andrew Lautz is the director of federal policy for National Taxpayers Union. He wrote this for InsideSources.com.



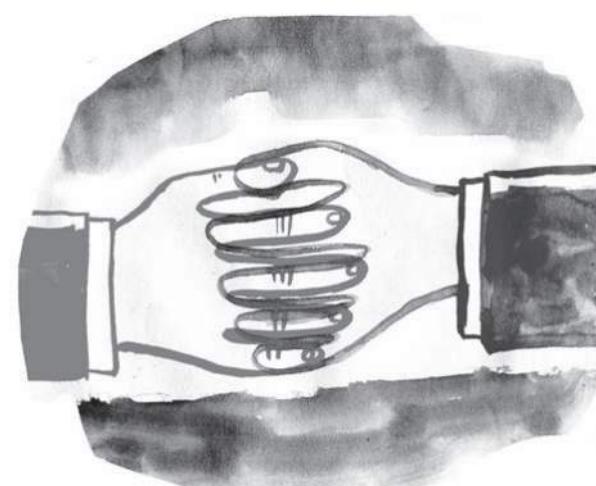
what Reagan and Congress did in 1985 or 1986, we would be looking at military spending next year near or below \$700 billion—still a staggering sum from which we can more than afford to defend the nation—instead of three-quarters of a trillion dollars.

Of course, Reagan first asked for and received large increases during his first term, and his last Defense Department budget was 7.4 percent higher than his first. But given that the present Pentagon budget has risen 36 percent in real terms in the last 20 years, some bipartisan reductions—in the model of the 1980s and 1990s Reagan, Bush and Clinton cuts—are long overdue, especially as the United States ends 20 years of war. Even a very modest 3 percent cut from last year's baseline—less than Reagan cut in both 1985 and 1986—would mean \$10 billion in reductions from Biden's current Pentagon budget of \$715 billion.

If lawmakers and Biden administration officials can muster the courage to take up reductions in the defense budget, where should they start? A cross-ideological group of civil society organizations and budget experts has a roadmap, outlining up to \$80 billion in potential reductions for the coming fiscal year alone. They include sensible recommendations like halting additional purchases of the issue-plagued and tremendously expensive F-35 aircraft (savings of \$11.4 billion), reducing wasteful service contracting by 15 percent (savings of \$28.5 billion), and canceling the Ford-class aircraft carrier (savings of \$12.5 billion per carrier).

Military hawks will complain that cuts will make us less well-positioned to take on foreign adversaries like China and Russia—as they complained about Reagan's proposed military budgets during the Cold War. But as a former assistant defense secretary to Reagan explained in a recent opinion piece, the U.S. military dwarfs China both in budget size and on numerous other metrics.

Simply put, Congress and the Biden administration can afford to make modest, bipartisan reductions in the defense budget. Big spending is not making us any safer.





Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 21-047

Opening Date: June 16, 2021
Closing Date: June 30, 2021

POSITION TITLE:	Meter Reader
DEPARTMENT:	Billing Department/Administration
LOCATION:	Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	\$16,742.00 - \$22,602.00 per annum, Non-Exempt
CONTRACT:	Not Contracted
POSITION(S):	Four (4)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Chief of Administration or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Required to work in the field obtaining utility meter readings for electric and water consumption meters, deep well or outflow meters and other similar devices and entering data in hand-held computers or devices.
- Perform work orders for customer service verifications and investigations. Reports findings and recommends solutions and updates customer accounts.
- Performs research on account discrepancies or unusual meter readings and consumption. Reports irregularities or reasons for fluctuations.
- Prepares reports of findings, deficiencies and recommendations to assist in investigations and billing resolutions as needed.
- Inspects, repairs, replaces or disconnects utility meters and equipment and services.
- Assigns routing numbers for customer locations.
- Monitors meters for damaged or unauthorized connections and tampering.
- Assist in reviewing cycles, work orders, and readings in preparation of bill processing.
- Assist in the processing and printing of customer bills and delivery of bills and notices.
- Assist other divisions with mapping projects, locations, and other requirements.
- Assist other divisions with mapping projects, locations, and other requirements.
- Operates and maintains use of government vehicles; conducts basic vehicle inspections to ensure they are in proper working order and recommends service and maintenance of vehicles.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS Diploma.

Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical principles; Recordkeeping principles; Safety principles and safe work practices; Applicable equipment used in field utility services (based on assignment); Modern office technology.

Skills in: Coordinating services with other departments or resources; Inspecting and operating field equipment related to utility usage (based on assignment); Performing basic mathematical calculations; Researching account information or discrepancies; Preparing and maintaining files, forms, reports and records; Copying and scanning documents; Updating, maintaining and preparing reports and spreadsheet tracking documents; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing: Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 21 – 051

Opening Date: June 17, 2021
Closing Date: July 01, 2021

POSITION TITLE:	Trades Assistant
DEPARTMENT:	Power Distribution
LOCATION:	Rota, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	\$16,742.00 to \$22,602.00 per annum, Non- Exempt
CONTRACT:	Not Contracted
POSITION(S):	One (1)

The incumbent will be under the overall supervision of the Rota Resident Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of Rota Power Distribution Division.

Duties:

- The Trades Assistant assists with installations, repairs and general maintenance in assigned service area; operates motorized vehicles, equipment machinery, and hand and power tools.
- Performs routine and preventative maintenance on equipment, vehicles, systems and/or infrastructure; performs basic inspections; and conducts basic troubleshooting of issues.
- Responds to trouble calls as needed.
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection and to direct traffic flow away from work site.
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used.
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete.
- Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports.
- Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily maintenance activities.
- Servicing equipment by disassembling, assembling, cleaning and calibrating.
- Assisting with equipment/vehicle inspections.
- Monitor and maintain pump fuel; Operating incinerators; Operating oil and water separator pump.
- Servicing and preparing oil filters.
- Responding to customer calls.
- Maintaining grounds, trimming trees and removing obstacles.
- Fabricating materials for required parts.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education.

Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Providing customer service; Reading maps and drawings; Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing/Certification: Valid U.S. Driver's License with appropriate class;

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: You may submit your CUC Employment Application and/or resume at the Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, from Monday to Friday, 7:30am – 4:30pm. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota can drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration office. Application and resume can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 21 – 048

Opening Date: June 16, 2021
Closing Date: June 30, 2021

POSITION TITLE:	Administrative Assistant
DEPARTMENT:	Tinian Administration
LOCATION:	Tinian, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	\$16,742.00 - \$22,602.00 per annum, Non-Exempt
CONTRACT:	Not Contracted
POSITION(S):	One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Tinian Resident Manager or his/her designee.



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 21 – 048

Opening Date: June 16, 2021
Closing Date: June 30, 2021

POSITION TITLE:	Administrative Assistant
DEPARTMENT:	Tinian Administration
LOCATION:	Tinian, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	\$16,742.00 - \$22,602.00 per annum, Non-Exempt
CONTRACT:	Not Contracted
POSITION(S):	One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Tinian Resident Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Gathers, assembles, processes and/or distributes forms, documents, requests, invoices, mail and/or records; reviews information for completeness, accuracy and content; resolves discrepancies; prepares information for processing and disseminates and/or maintains documentation.
- Provides reception duties and responds to request for information; provides customer support with completing forms and answering routine questions; refers to inquiries as required to the appropriate resource; and advises management of issued for resolution.
- Enters data in systems or on documents; organizes and maintain files, records, logs, and/or timesheets, ensure file integrity and retention of records and documentation according to established procedures.
- Retrieves and/or prepares reports, correspondence, documents, deposits, account adjustments and other related documentation.
- Monitors supplies, materials and/or equipment inventory; prepares requisitions replenishment of supplies or required services; monitors order status, coordinates deliveries and services with vendors; and may provide pick-up or delivery of documents or items as needed.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Supervisory principles, practices and techniques (based on assignment); Cash handling practices (based on assignment); Customer service principles; Basic filing and recordkeeping principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Basic inventory and supplies maintenance practices; Specialized equipment relevant to area of assignment; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards (based on assignment); Providing customer services, Filing, organizing and maintain records and files; Preparing basic reports, correspondence and documentations; managing time and prioritizing requests; Providing attention to detail; Proofreading documents for accuracy; Identifying errors and making corrections; Reviewing and researching account information; Maintaining confidentiality of records and information; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with co-workers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing: Valid Driver's License with appropriate class.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 21 – 051

Opening Date: June 17, 2021
Closing Date: July 01, 2021

POSITION TITLE:	Trades Assistant
DEPARTMENT:	Tinian Water Division
LOCATION:	Tinian, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
ANNUAL SALARY:	\$16,742.00 - \$22,602.00 per annum, Non- Exempt
CONTRACT:	Not Contracted
POSITION(S):	One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Tinian Resident Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Assists with installations, repairs and general maintenance in assigned service area; operates motorized vehicles, equipment machinery, and hand and power tools.
- Performs routine and preventative maintenance on equipment, vehicles, systems and/or infrastructure; performs basic inspections; and conducts basic troubleshooting of issues.
- Responds to trouble calls as needed.
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection and to direct traffic flow away from work site.
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used.
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete.
- Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports.
- Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily maintenance activities.
- Performs daily well and pump station facility maintenance, cleaning and monitoring;
- Assists plumbing and chlorine maintenance crew;
- Utilizing digging equipment for locating and repairing leaks;
- Repairing and securing pressure reducer valves, main valves, service lines and laterals, and booster pumps;
- Assisting with meter installation and repair;
- Collecting water samples.
- Must be able to lift objects weighing at 40 lbs. or more.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS Diploma.

Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Providing customer service; Reading maps and drawings; Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing: Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

Business

Docomo Pacific backs Pride Marianas Youth's activities

Docomo Pacific, regional leader in innovation, telecommunications, & entertainment, takes pride in supporting Pride Marianas Youth's events celebrating Pride Month.

June is Pride Month—a global celebration where many collective voices unite to support and honor our LGBTQIA+ community. Leading the charge in the CNMI is Pride Marianas Youth. Last week it held the “Pride at the Park” event, which featured family-friendly activities and a specially curated exhibit housed by the museum, which included stories of Pride from the Northern Marianas Humanities Council.

Their next exciting event is “Safe Spaces for All” scheduled for June 25, 2021. The event is a Pride-themed wave, walk and watch event to raise awareness in the CNMI followed by a program by the Humanities Council. A 5K Drag Race is also planned to encourage physical fitness for youth and families to take part, dress up and support that love will always win in the Marianas.

Docomo Pacific is proud to assist the Pride Marianas Youth organization for the second year in a row. The contributed items will be given to the anticipated 100+ participants and volunteers, which included bags, reusable straws, and



Docomo Pacific Brent CNMI brand owner Deleon Guerrero and Docomo Pacific CNMI People Ops Business Partner Michelle Atalig pose with Jennifer F. Maratita, PhD, LMHC, Pride Marianas Youth founder, and its volunteers.

DOCOMO PACIFIC

beach chairs.

“Pride Marianas Youth and Docomo Pacific through the years continue to be amazing supporting partners for our island LGBTQIA+ community and, most importantly, our youth,” said Jennifer F. Maratita, president and founder, Pride Marianas Youth. “Our community continues to embrace increased awareness and celebrations of diversity, empowerment of equality and respect, and braver safer, more inclusive environments for our pride youth to thrive. It is through these collaborations that a community unites to raise awareness of the resilience, struggles, celebrations, and the pride that exists within

our community. The Docomo Pacific family continues to support the amazing cause and partnership with Pride Marianas Youth’s efforts to participate in this global celebration here on our islands.”

Pride Marianas Youth is a coalition of family and friends who want to show support to the youth who may be struggling with their identity or having feelings of insecurities. Their mission is to show love and support for all LGBTQIA+ youth and to increase awareness of the issues faced by the LGBTQIA+ community on the island. For more information on this organization, follow them on their Facebook and Instagram pages under @pridemarianasyouth. (PR)

FAA: Airports will get \$8B pandemic relief

WASHINGTON (AP)—Airports around the country will share \$8 billion in federal grants to help them recover from the pandemic, which caused a steep drop in air travel and a loss of revenue that airports expect from airlines and passengers.

Most of the money will go to big airports with commercial airline service. They will share \$6.5 billion based on the number of passenger boardings, plus another \$800 million to offer rent relief to companies that operate concessions such as food and retail outlets in terminals.

Airports must keep at least 90% of the workers they had before the pandemic to receive one of the grants, which will be handled by the Federal Aviation Administration.

Congress approved the money as part of a pandemic-relief measure that President Joe Biden signed in March. The Biden administration

said the grants would protect airport jobs and construction projects as travel recovers.

The FAA said several hundred airports will get grant money, including \$175.7 million for Seattle-Tacoma International, \$115 million for Philadelphia International, \$74.3 million for Daniel K. Inouye International in Honolulu, \$56.2 million for St. Louis Lambert International, and \$50.6 million for Raleigh-Durham International in North Carolina.

Fed's Powell says high inflation temporary

WASHINGTON (AP)—Federal Reserve Chair Jerome Powell on Tuesday responded to concerns from Republican lawmakers about spiking inflation by reiterating his view that current price increases will likely prove temporary.

Consumer prices jumped 5% in May compared with a year earlier, the largest increase in 13 years. Republican House members have sought to blame higher inflation on President Joe Biden's \$1.9 trillion economic relief package, approved

in March, in an effort to retake the House next year.

“The Biden inflation agenda of too much money chasing too few goods is causing major harm to hardworking families,” said Louisiana Rep. Steve Scalise, the second-ranking Republican House leader.

Powell avoided participating in such policy debates, despite attempts from both Democrats and Republicans to draw him in.

But he said in testimony before a congressional oversight

panel that recent price gains mostly reflected temporary supply bottlenecks, and the fact that prices fell sharply last spring at the onset of the pandemic, which make inflation figures now, compared with a year ago, look much larger.

Most of the price gains have occurred in categories such as used cars, airplane tickets, and hotel rooms, Powell said, where demand has soared as the economy has quickly reopened, catching many companies flat-footed.

Nation

Biden urges shots for young adults as variant fears grow

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. government is stepping up efforts to get younger Americans vaccinated for COVID-19 as the White House acknowledges it will miss two key vaccination benchmarks and as concern grows about the spread of a new variant that threatens to set the country back in the months ahead.

The delta variant, first identified in India, in the last two weeks has come to represent more than 20% of coronavirus infections in the U.S., the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported Tuesday. That's double what it was when the CDC last reported on the variant's prevalence.

“The delta variant is currently the greatest threat in the U.S. to our attempt to eliminate COVID-19,” Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, said at a White House briefing on the virus. “Good news: Our vaccines are effective against the delta variant.”

He added: “We have the tools. So let's use them, and crush the outbreak.”

The White House on Tuesday acknowledged that President Joe Biden will fall short of reaching his goal of vaccinating 70% of all American adults with at least one shot by Independence Day. But it tried to paint an optimistic picture nonetheless by stressing that the nation had reached that threshold for those aged 30 and older and expects to meet

it for those age 27 or older by the July 4 holiday.

Biden also expects to miss a second goal—fully vaccinating 165 million adult Americans by July 4. White House COVID-19 coordinator Jeff Zients projected it will take several more weeks to hit that number. On Monday, the U.S. crossed 150 million fully vaccinated.

White House press secretary Jen Psaki rejected the idea that the missed July 4 benchmarks would represent a failure for the administration, telling reporters, “We don't see it exactly like something went wrong.”

Still, administration officials said they were redoubling their focus on vaccinating younger Americans age 18-26, who have proved to be least likely to get a vaccine when it's available for them.

The nationwide rate of new vaccinations has dropped off precipitously over the past month even as shots have become more available, with fewer than 300,000 Americans now getting their first dose per day on average—a pace that, if sustained, will have the U.S. not reaching Biden's 70% goal until late July at the earliest.

Officials are also increasingly concerned about regional variations in the vaccination program.

More than 16 states and the District of Columbia have vaccinated 70% of their adult population. But others—par-

ACROSS THE NATION

Houston hospital workers fired, resign over COVID-19 vaccine

DALLAS (AP)—More than 150 employees at a Houston hospital system who refused to get the COVID-19 vaccine have been fired or resigned after a judge dismissed an employee lawsuit over the vaccine requirement. A spokesperson for Houston Methodist hospital system said 153 employees either resigned in the two-week suspension period or were terminated on Tuesday.

The case over how far health care institutions can go to protect patients and others against the coronavirus has been closely watched. It's believed to be the first of its kind in the U.S. But it won't be the end of the debate. Earlier this month, a federal judge threw

out the lawsuit filed by 117 employees over the requirement. The hospital system's decision in April to require the vaccine for workers made it the first major U.S. health care system to do so. District Judge Lynn Hughes, who dismissed the lawsuit on June 12, said that if the employees didn't like the requirement, they could go work elsewhere.

Pelosi signals new panel to investigate Jan. 6 Capitol riot

WASHINGTON (AP)—House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is signaling that she is poised to create a new committee to investigate the Jan. 6 insurrection at the Capitol, pushing closer to a partisan investigation of the attack after Senate Republicans blocked the creation of an indepen-

ticularly in the South and Midwest—are lagging substantially behind, with four not having yet reached 50% vaccination rates.

The White House said meeting Biden's vaccination goals is less important than the pace of the nation's reopening, which is exceeding even its own internal projections as the overwhelming majority of the nation's most vulnerable people are fully vaccinated and cases and deaths are at their lowest rates since the earliest days of the pandemic, averaging about 11,000 new infections and fewer than 300 deaths per day.

More states are opening back up, with Michigan on Tuesday becoming the latest to do away with a mask mandate and virus restrictions. The state had the nation's worst outbreak this spring.

“We have succeeded beyond our highest expectations,” Zeints said.

Americans at highest risk for complications from COVID-19 are overwhelmingly vaccinated, according to CDC data, but only 53% aged 25-39 have received one dose. Among those 18-24, it's 47%.

“Where the country has more work to do is particularly with 18 to 26 year olds,” Zeints said.

Zients and government experts said the rise of the delta variant should motivate younger Americans to get vaccinated.

dent probe. A person familiar with the matter said after a meeting with Democrats that Pelosi had told her colleagues that she would create a select panel. The person spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private remarks. But Pelosi later denied that, telling reporters, “No, I did not make that announcement.” The new committee would come after the Senate voted earlier this month to block legislation to form a bipartisan, independent commission investigating the attack by former President Donald Trump's supporters.

Pelosi said afterward that the House would step up investigations of the riot, in which a violent mob overran police, broke into the building and hunted for lawmakers to try to stop the certification of Joe Biden's election victory.

Asia

Turtle carcasses wash ashore in Sri Lanka after ship sinks

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Nearly a hundred carcasses of turtles with throat and shell damage, as well as a dozen dead dolphins and a blue whale, have washed ashore in Sri Lanka since a container ship burned and sank, raising fears of a severe marine disaster.

Ecologists believe the deaths were directly caused by the fire and release of hazardous chemicals while the Singapore-flagged X-Press Pearl burned for 12 days and sank last week off Sri Lanka's main port in the capital Colombo. Government officials, however, said these causes were "provisionally" confirmed and the investigation was continuing.

The fire started on the ship on May 20 and dead marine species started washing ashore days later.

A ship manifest seen by The Associated Press said 81 of the ship's nearly 1,500 containers held "dangerous" goods.

The Sri Lankan navy believes the blaze was caused by its chemical cargo, most of which was destroyed in the fire. But debris including burned fiberglass and tons of plastic pellets have severely polluted the surrounding waters and a long stretch of the island nation's famed beaches.

Post-mortem analysis on the carcasses are being performed at five government-run laboratories and separately by



A stray dog stands amid the waves as decomposed remains of a turtle lies on a beach polluted following the sinking of a container ship that caught fire while transporting chemicals off Kapungoda, outskirts of Colombo, Sri Lanka, Monday, June 21, 2021. AP

the Government Analysts Department, said an official of the wildlife department who spoke on condition of anonymity as the official was not authorized to speak to the media.

"Provisionally, we can say that these deaths were caused by two methods—one is due to burns from the heat and secondly due to chemicals. These are obvious," said Anil Jasinghe, secretary of the environment ministry.

He refrained from giving an exact cause, saying "post-mortem analysis are still being conducted."

Thushan Kapurusinghe of the Turtle Conservation Project blamed the fire and chemicals the ship carried for killing the turtles.

With over three decades experience on turtle conserva-

tion, Kapurusinghe said the dead turtles had oral, cloacal and throat bleeding and "specific parts of their carapace have burns and erosion signs."

The sea off Sri Lanka and its coastline are home to five species of turtles that regularly come to lay eggs. March to June is the peak season for turtle arrivals.

Lalith Ekanayake, a marine and coastal ecologist, suspects, based on the nature of the fire and amount of chemicals, that "at least 400 turtles may have died and their carcasses may have sunk in the sea or drifted to the deep sea."

Sri Lanka plans to claim compensation from X-Press Feeders, the ship's owner, and already have submitted an interim claim of \$40 million.

reason to believe crimes against humanity had been committed during Duterte's crackdown on drugs between July 1, 2016, and March 16, 2019. She said she had sought authorization to open a formal investigation and the court's judges had 120 days to decide. The dates cover the period when Duterte launched his police-enforced crackdown shortly after winning a six-year presidential term up until when he withdrew the Philippines from the court.

Kim sister derides US official, dismisses chances for talks

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un dismissed prospects for an early resumption of diplomacy with the United States, saying Tuesday that U.S. expectations of talks would "plunge them into a greater disappointment." Kim Yo Jong's blunt statement indicates that the diplomatic impasse over North Korea's nuclear program is likely to continue unless the North suffers greater pandemic-related economic difficulties and needs urgent outside assistance, some experts said. Hope for a restart of nuclear talks flared briefly after Kim Jong Un said last week that his country must be ready for both dialogue and confrontation, though more for confrontation. U.S. National Security adviser Jake Sullivan called Kim's comments an "interesting signal." On Tuesday, Kim Yo Jong derided Sullivan's response.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Duterte threatens to arrest those who refuse vaccination

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The Philippine president has threatened to order the arrest of Filipinos who refuse COVID-19 vaccination and told them to leave the country if they would not cooperate with efforts to end a public health emergency. President Rodrigo Duterte, who is known for his public outbursts and brash rhetoric, said in televised remarks Monday night that he has become exasperated with people who refuse to get immunized then help spread the coronavirus. "Don't get me wrong. There is a crisis being faced in this country. There is a national emergency. If you don't want to get vaccinated, I'll have you arrested and I'll inject the vaccine in your butt," Duterte said. Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra acknowledged on Tuesday that there was no Philippine law criminalizing refusal to get vaccinated against the coronavirus.

Duterte on possible ICC killings probe: 'You must be crazy'

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte said he's ready to face possible charges in any local court for the thousands of killings under his anti-drug crackdown but never before the International Criminal Court, which he has repeatedly ridiculed. The ICC's outgoing chief prosecutor said last week that a preliminary examination found

World

Colombia reaches 100,000 deaths from COVID-19 as cases surge

BOGOTA, Colombia

(AP)—Colombia reached 100,000 confirmed deaths from COVID-19 this week, becoming just the tenth country in the world to hit the grim milestone.

The South American nation of 50 million has been registering a growing number of daily cases since April and over the past seven days it had the world's third-highest per capita death rate from COVID-19, according to data published by Oxford University.

On Monday night, President Iván Duque blamed antigovernment protests that began at the end of April for many of the fatalities, saying that "more than 10,000 deaths could have been avoided" if Colombians had not held large gatherings over the past seven weeks.

But epidemiologists in Colombia said it's too soon to tell how much of an impact the protests had on the current surge in COVID-19 deaths.

"The protests definitely played a role" in coronavirus contagion, said Diego Rosselli, a professor of epidemiology at the Javeriana University in Bogota. "But at this moment putting any number on how many deaths they caused is mere speculation."

More than 25,000 people have died from COVID-19 in Colombia since May 1, or about a quarter of those who have died from the disease since the first case of coronavirus was registered in Colombia in March of last year.

Rosselli said more contagious variants of the virus may have contributed to the sharp acceleration in death rates, as has happened in nearby countries like Argen-



AP Cemetery and funeral workers lift a coffin containing the remains of a man who died of COVID-19, at the Zipaquirá's Park Cemetery in Zipaquirá, Colombia, Friday, June 18, 2021.

tina and Brazil.

Fatigue with sanitary measures—like using facemasks—crowded living arrangements and fewer restrictions on gatherings have also fueled contagion in Colombia and elsewhere in South America.

The region makes up just 5% of the world's population but accounts for almost a quarter of all COVID-19 deaths.

In Colombia, the rise in cases comes as the government lifts some of the last restrictions it had put in place to control the spread of the coronavirus and allows nightclubs, bars and cinemas to open for the first time in more than a year.

Cities like Medellin and Bogota are also preparing to hold trade shows and music events that will be attended by thousands of people, while 10,000 people recently attended a soccer match in the coastal city of Barranquilla.

Municipal governments say they have no option but to allow these events in order to regain jobs and help the economy get back on its feet.

Colombia's unemployment rate doubled last year as the government implemented

several lockdowns to slow down contagion and the country's GDP shrank by 7%.

Vaccination sped up in June with up to 350,000 doses administered in one day, but only 10% of Colombia's population is fully vaccinated.

Doctors fear that recent decisions to allow more gatherings will increase the number of severely ill patients arriving at hospitals, which are already struggling to cope. In Bogota, Cali and Medellin, more than 95% of intensive care beds at hospitals are already occupied.

Paola Cabra, an emergency room doctor in the Samaritana University Hospital in Bogota, said the best thing would be to return to lockdowns to decrease infections.

"But in a country like Colombia you can't do that," Cabra said. "Most people here work independently to make a living and cannot afford to stay home doing nothing."

The hospital's 19 intensive care units for COVID-19 patients have been full for weeks, forcing staff to add respirators and other equipment to ER beds.

Gunmen kill 11 police officers in Burkina Faso; 4 missing

OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso (AP)—Gunmen

ambushed a group of police officers in Burkina Faso, killing at least 11 of them in the deadliest attack of its kind yet in this West African country where extremist violence is escalating.

At least four other officers were missing after Monday's attack near the town of Barsalogho in the volatile country's center-north region, Burkina Faso's security ministry confirmed in a press release Tuesday.

"The violence is getting closer to Barsalogho. We are really concerned," said

"This clearly shows that the militant threat is not abating despite the ongoing major military operations," said Heni Nsaibia, senior researcher at the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project.

Violence linked to al-Qaeda and the Islamic State has devastated Burkina Faso, killing thousands and displacing more than 1 million people since 2016. Fighting has further intensified in recent months, and more than 50 people were killed in one week alone in April including two Spanish journalists and an Irish conservationist.

Environment

Comments sought on plan for WWII-era hospital dump in Talafofo

By IVA MAURIN
CORRESPONDENT

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is inviting the public to comment on its proposal not to do anything—called a “no action” plan—to remediate any contamination at a World War II-era hospital dump site in Talafofo, Saipan.

The public has until July 20, 2021, to submit comments on the “no action” proposed plan for the Hospital Dump Site hazardous, toxic, and radioactive waste project in Talafofo. The USACE cites a previous study that states that there is “no unacceptable risk to human health or the environment” at the site, hence the “no action” proposal.

The area is what’s called a formerly used defense sites, or FUDS, property subject to environmental restoration, as mandated by Section 211 of the Superfund Amendment and Restoration Act of 1986. The project site is located in Kingfisher Golf Links, on a portion of a property used as a U.S. Navy hospital during World War II.

The site in Talafofo was a surgical hospital, which had an x-ray department; a dental clinic; and eye, ear, nose, and throat clinic, and a laboratory.

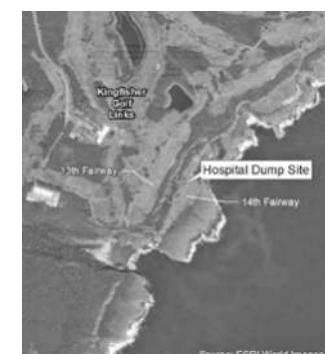
A biorepository of Micronesian marine specimens at the University of Guam Marine Laboratory is welcoming its largest addition yet—a private collection of around 30,000 coral specimens from Richard Randall, a UOG professor emeritus of marine biology.

The facility—the Guam Ecosystems Collaboratorium for Corals and Oceans (GECO) Biorepository—is both a physical and cyber warehouse of records and images that is operated by the Guam EPSCoR program, which is funded by the National Science Foundation.

Randall’s collection includes specimens from Guam and throughout the Pacific and reflects the 56 years he spent at the UOG Marine Laboratory researching coral reef biology and geology.

“It’s an impressive collection that’s really important for us to take care of and share with the world and try to use it to provide an impetus for collaborative research,” said David Burdick, the biorepository’s collections manager.

During the late 1960s, Randall witnessed the first crown-of-thorns starfish outbreak in Guam and managed to retrieve a few coral samples before they were eaten. He



Source: Draft Final Proposed Plan, Hospital Dump Site, Talofofo, Saipan, May 2021

cific background value.”

Based on the sampling done, it was concluded that the metals in the soil do not pose an “unacceptable risk” to human health, and that “potential risk to ecological receptors from exposure to the metals reduced to an acceptable level.”

Last June 10, the USACE presented its findings and recommendations at a public meeting held at the Hyatt Regency Saipan in Garapan, attended by both Precinct 4 Reps. Joel Camacho and Sheila Babauta. The Talafofo hospital dump site project is in Precinct 4.

At the meeting, Babauta said there should be more effort to reach the communities—particularly the people who farm and live in sites that could potentially harm

arsenic, chromium, lead, mercury, and silver—exceeded the Pacific Basin environmental screening levels, and were then referred to as “contaminants of potential concern.” It also included, “to a lesser extent,” total petroleum hydrocarbons as diesel-range and residual-range organics.

In October 2020, the USACE completed its Remedial Investigation report, a follow-up to identify if the heavy metals identified in the 2011 report

pose an “unacceptable risk” to humans and the environment. Soil samples were also collected to verify that remaining TPH concentrations in soil do not exceed the Tropical Pacific Environmental Screening Levels.

Except for arsenic, metals in the site soil (barium, cadmium, chromium, lead, mercury, selenium, and silver) did not exceed the TPESL level. The RI report stated that for arsenic, “the 95% upper confidence limit was less than the site-spe-

families and crops. Comments from the community also included a call to be transparent when it comes to testing, and if other information were considered besides just the TPESL. There also was an interest to consider doing fish tissue and biota studies in the nearshore environment to check hazardous levels, given that heavy metals bioaccumulate in living organisms.

The USACE presented its recommendation of a “No Action” for chemical contamination in site soil” since, according to the report, while there are metals and petroleum contamination in soil at the site, they do not pose an “unacceptable risk.”

The community is encouraged to review the seven-page Proposed Plan (with details on the RI) available at the Administrative Record File at the Joeten-Kiyu Public Library in Susupe, and provide comments to the USACE via email at FUDS-POH@usace.army.mil until July 20, 2021.

The proposed plan states that if after consideration of public comments, the “No Action” recommendation is ultimately selected, there will be no additional investigation or remediation on the site, and the project will be closed.

specimens, Burdick said.

“He recorded an unusual amount of data, like where it was living, its name, and how much light it was exposed to, and how that may have influenced its shape. That information can help us understand their habitat requirements and discern between similar species,” Burdick said.

So far, the facility has received less than one-tenth of the collection, and it may take years to catalog each item and upload them to the GECCO Biorepository’s online database.

“Right now, we’re going through all of the coral specimens and cataloging the ones we have,” said Kelsie Ebeling-Whited, the biorepository’s technician. “We log the specimen number, the note number, its species and family. We want that all in a database so that we know what corals we have [in Guam and the region].”

Once the collection has been processed, it will serve as a resource for researchers around the world to reference and better understand the diversity of the corals found in the Pacific. The collection will also be accessible to the public as it’s added to the biorepository’s online database at <https://specifyportal.uog.edu/>. (PR)

UOG Biorepository receives 30,000-specimen coral collection



University of Guam professor emeritus of Marine Biology Richard Randall holds a coral specimen that may be an undescribed species. The specimen is one of 30,000 in Randall’s private collection that he is turning over to the GECCO Biorepository at the UOG Marine Laboratory.

claims some of the specimens in his collection may be new species, and others may no longer exist.

“In some cases, if he’s described a new species, we’d



David Burdick, the collections manager of the GECCO Biorepository, holds a specimen from Randall’s coral collection.

have to publish in a book or a journal about it [to officially establish it as a new species],” Burdick said. “I feel like we’re always trying to play catch-

up trying to understand more about these organisms before we lose some of them.”

Randall took meticulous field notes about each of the

Life & Style

Walt Disney World's 50th anniversary party starts Oct. 1

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP)—Walt Disney World is planning an 18-month celebration in honor of its 50th anniversary.

All four parks at the Lake Buena Vista, Florida, resort will take part in "The World's Most Magical Celebration," beginning Oct. 1, Disney announced Tuesday.

On Oct. 1, 1971, the resort opened to guests, culminating years spent planning and developing Walt Disney's "magical dream," officials said in a statement announcing the celebration. Since then, the vacation destination has expanded from Magic Kingdom, to include EPCOT, Animal Kingdom and Hollywood Studios. The resort also includes multiple themed hotels, water parks and Disney Springs, a shopping and restaurant venue.

The celebration will include a new nighttime show called "Disney Enchantment," at the Magic Kingdom. The show will have enhanced lighting, fireworks and immersive projection effects that extend



This undated photo provided by Walt Disney World shows Disney characters at Walt Disney World in Lake Buena Vista, Fla. Walt Disney World is planning an 18-month celebration in honor of its 50th anniversary, starting in October 2021. Disney announced Tuesday, June 22 that all four parks at the resort will take part in "The World's Most Magical Celebration."

MATT STROSHANE/WALT DISNEY WORLD VIA AP

Kobe Bryant's widow to settle lawsuit over deadly crash

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Kobe Bryant's widow has agreed to settle a lawsuit against the pilot and owners of the helicopter that crashed last year, killing the NBA star, his daughter, Gianna, and seven others.

Vanessa Bryant, her children and relatives of other victims filed a settlement agreement notice Tuesday with a federal judge in Los Angeles but terms of the confidential deal weren't disclosed.

If approved by the court, the settlement—first announced by KABC-TV—would end a negligence and wrongful death lawsuit filed against the estate of the pilot and the owner and operator of the helicopter that crashed into a hillside on Jan. 26, 2020.

Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter, Gianna, and six other passengers were flying from Orange County to a youth basketball tourna-

ment at his Mamba Sports Academy in Ventura County. The helicopter encountered thick fog in the San Fernando Valley north of Los Angeles.

Pilot Ara Zobayan climbed sharply and had nearly broken through the clouds when the Sikorsky S-76 helicopter banked abruptly and plunged into the Calabasas hills below, killing all nine aboard instantly before flames engulfed the wreckage.

Spears set to make rare remarks to conservatorship judge

LOS ANGELES (AP)—In the most anticipated hearing in the case in years, Britney Spears is expected to address a judge overseeing the conservatorship that has controlled the pop star's money and affairs since 2008.

If Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Brenda Penny does not make a last-minute decision Wednesday to seal the proceedings, Spears' words will be heard in open court for the first time in the 13-year conservatorship.

The hearing has been eagerly awaited by the fans in the so-called #FreeBritney movement, who feel she is being controlled unfairly against her will and are likely to gather outside the courthouse in large numbers.



Spears

Spears, who is scheduled to take part remotely, asked for the hearing so she could address the court directly.

Her court-appointed attorney, Samuel Ingham III, made the request at an April 28 hearing. He gave no indication of what the 39-year-old pop star wants to say.

But in recent court filings, Spears has sought a greater say over who runs the conservatorship, and has asked that her father, who had extensive power over her life and money for most of its existence, be removed.

Spears said through Ingham that she fears her father James Spears, and would not end a 2 1/2-year pause on her career as long as he has control over it.

Water leak damages more than ceiling for neighbors

DEAR ABBY: I live in an apartment and recently had a serious leak come through my bathroom ceiling. I called maintenance and texted my upstairs neighbor, who asked me when they were coming. I responded that I didn't know and I wasn't sure whether they'd have to go up to her apartment or not.

Well, they went to her apartment first. She was VERY upset and messaged me a dozen more times to let me know how stressed she was, that she was crying and afraid she would get evicted from her apartment because she has a dog she failed to put on her lease. She ended by saying "next time" I should let her know in advance. Abby, I DID let her know. But I guess she wants more notice next time she causes an emergency, so she'll have more time to hide her dog.

So—I'm supposed to let my apartment get more water damage to give her time to hide an animal she should've put on her lease years ago and be paying pet rent for? I feel like she was trying to make me feel bad when she's the one who is wrong for being irresponsible. Why do I have to cater to her needs first? Should I feel bad?

LEAKY MESS IN THE WEST

DEAR LEAKY MESS: You do not have to accept the guilt trip your neighbor laid on you or "cater" to her. You handled the situation appropriately and have nothing to

apologize for. When the "good neighbor policy" was written, she must have been out to lunch.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I got COVID from a friend who came to our book club even though her husband was ill. When she texted us a few days later about his positive test, I told her I was now sick. She called and left a message that she felt bad if she had given me COVID, but she has shown no concern since. I have had long-term COVID chest pain for three months, but she's never sent a card or called to see how I am. I reached out to her several times and even brought her a birthday gift, but she doesn't seem to care that I'm not well. It's awkward because we're neighbors and in several groups together. How can I save this friendship?

RECOVERING IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR RECOVERING: How can YOU save this friendship? Lady, YOU are the injured party. This woman may be a neighbor, but she isn't acting like a friend. Call her and clear the air about how the situation has made you feel. When you see her, be civil and keep your distance. If she had been less self-centered, she wouldn't have exposed you and the other book club members to what her husband had—even if it was "only" a common cold.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: What are the three most important things par-

DEAR ABBY

By Abigail Van Buren
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



ents should instill in their children in their formative years?

WONDERING IN ARIZONA

DEAR WONDERING: In my opinion, the three most important things would be empathy, that they are loved and curiosity.

■■■

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Ayton soars for last second alley-oop, Suns beat Clippers



PHOENIX (AP)— Devin Booker sat in a chair with a crooked and swollen nose, complete with tape over three fresh stitches.

He also had a big smile on his face, remembering Jae Crowder's pass, Deandre Ayton's tip-in dunk and a play that will live in Phoenix Suns lore for a long, long time.

Ayton jammed an alley-oop pass from Crowder with 0.7 seconds left, lifting the Suns to a 104-103 win over the Los Angeles Clippers on Tuesday night in Game 2 of the Western Conference finals.

It was a game that looked as if it was all but over, but Booker's Suns were not going to be denied.

"I believed it could happen," Booker said. "100 percent."

The Suns were down one with 0.9 seconds left when Crowder lofted a high pass on an out-of-bounds play on the baseline. A soaring Ayton came down the lane and stuffed it through the net over L.A.'s Ivica Zubac during the second half of Game 2 of the NBA basketball Western Conference Finals, Tuesday, June 22, 2021, in Phoenix.



when Mikal Bridges missed a corner 3-pointer and the ball was deflected out of bounds.

Instead, it set up Crowder's heave to Ayton, who was domi-

nant in the paint all game long. Even with his big late shot-making, George's missed free throws loomed large.

"Obviously, it was an op-

portunity that was missed," George said. "Pat made an unbelievable play that put me in the position to extend the lead. I am always confident

at the free throw line. I have always been very successful in clutch moments at the free throw line. Tonight, I was just unsuccessful."

Pistons win lottery, receive No. 1 pick in 2021 NBA draft

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

the first time since taking Bob Lanier in 1970.

And, as if there was any doubt, Weaver said Cunningham—just the fourth player to win Big 12 Player and Freshman of the Year honors in the same season, after averaging 20.2 points per game in his lone collegiate season—is at the "top of the list."

"It's going to mean a lot. It's going to mean a lot for this team," Wallace said on the ESPN telecast of the lottery, after he served as the team's virtual representative for the event that took place in Secaucus, New Jersey. "I think the team is headed in the right direction."

Orlando will get the No. 5 and No. 8 selections, with Oklahoma City picking No. 6 and Golden State also with two lottery slots — No. 7, as part of a trade with Minnesota, and the Warriors' own pick at No. 14.

The rest of the lottery results: Sacramento picks No. 9, New Orleans No. 10, Charlotte No. 11, San Antonio at No. 12, and Indiana at No. 13.

The lottery—14 ping-pong balls, all numbered 1 through 14, placed into a hopper—technically only determines the first four picks. The rest then default to a pre-established order of finish; Golden State, for example, had only a 2.4% chance of its own pick being anything other than the No. 14 selection.

And form held through the first six picks that were unveiled. The No. 8 pick, which was slotted to Chicago, winds up with the Magic as part of the Nikola Vucevic trade from this season. That's when the first significant buck-the-odds move happened, when Toronto's 31.9% chance of cashing into a top-four slot delivered.

The Thunder will have three first-round picks, but none higher than No. 6. That's good news for them, and really good news for Houston.

The Rockets had a 52% chance of winning a top-four pick. The worst Houston could do was the No. 5 selection, and that truly was a worst-case scenario because if the Rockets were outside of the top four the pick would convey to Oklahoma City as part of the compensation for the Russell Westbrook-Chris Paul trade between those teams in 2019.

In that scenario, if Houston had gotten the No. 5 pick, it would have gone to the Thunder in exchange for the No. 18 pick.

But the Rockets held on, getting the No. 2 pick as one of the building blocks they can use to reload after finishing with the NBA's worst record this season. Viewers might have found out the order before Rockets general manager Rafael Stone, who decided not to watch the stressful countdown.

"I decided that probably would be unpleasant,"

Stone said.

The consensus opinion has been that the No. 1 pick will be either a one-and-done college player—Cunningham, Southern California center Evan Mosley or Gonzaga guard Jalen Suggs—or someone from the G-League development program like guard Jalen Green or forward Jonathan Kuminga.

And, as always, it'll be a guessing game: Most of the players expected to be lottery picks are teenagers, mostly 19, some 18.

Sitting at No. 3 gives the Cavs a chance to add another young player to their "core four"—Darius Garland, Collin Sexton, Isaac Okoro and Jared Allen—and maybe find a player capable of pushing Cleveland back to relevance.

Cavs general manager Koby Altman feels this draft has more quality at the top than previous years.

"Even beyond the top five, there could be potential All-Stars," he said.

The rest of the first round, for now, is slotted this way—Washington will pick 15th, followed by Oklahoma City, Memphis, Oklahoma City, New York, Atlanta, New York, the Los Angeles Lakers, then Houston at both No. 23 and No. 24, followed by the Los Angeles Clippers, Denver, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Phoenix and Utah.

Phoenix Suns center Deandre Ayton, right, scores over Los Angeles Clippers center Ivica Zubac during the second half of Game 2 of the NBA basketball Western Conference Finals, Tuesday, June 22, 2021, in Phoenix.

The Suns have won a franchise-record nine straight in the playoffs.

The Suns were led by Cameron Payne, who was brilliant while subbing for All-Star Chris Paul. He finished with a career-high 29 points. Ayton had 24 points and 14 rebounds, while Booker added 20 points.

"We just had no answer for Cameron Payne," Lue said. "He got downhill all night. His speed and his quickness really hurt us all night."

Payne repeatedly carved through the Clippers defense, making tough buckets at the rim with pretty left-handed finishes. He made what looked like a crucial layup with about 90 seconds left, finishing high off the glass to give the Suns a 100-95 lead.

But the gritty Clippers responded and nearly pulled this one out.

"It is a hard game to swallow because look at this game, we've got this game won," Beverley said. "But we have been in the trenches before. We respond well in the trenches and we will respond well. We always do."

It was a tough night for the stars from Game 1 until the final minutes. Booker shot just 5 of 16 from the field and missed part of the third quarter with a bloody nose. George was 10 of 23 from the field and missed his first seven 3-point attempts before his late buckets.

Ayton continued his eye-opening performance in these playoffs. The No. 1 overall pick in 2018 out of Arizona often has been overshadowed by later picks in the same draft like Atlanta's Trae Young and Dallas' Luka Doncic. But he has carved out quite a niche in Phoenix and now has a signature play that will live on in franchise history.

The Suns were playing without Paul for the second straight game. The 11-time All-Star has been in the league's COVID-19 health and safety protocol for the past week and the team isn't sure when he'll return.

Clippers star Kawhi Leonard missed his fourth straight game with a right knee sprain, and he stayed in Los Angeles to get treatment on the injury.

The action was physical from the opening minutes. Referee Scott Foster gave technicals to Crowder and Clippers forward Marcus Morris Sr. after some jawing following a scrum for a loose ball.

"Those are my Kentucky guys," Booker said with a grin. "I told them 'Go Big Blue.'"

The Suns now have a 2-0 lead in the series heading to Los Angeles for Game 3 on Thursday night. The Clippers will be fighting from a 2-0 deficit for the third time in these playoffs after rallying to beat the Mavericks and Jazz.

The Crowder-to-Ayton connection negated a Clippers rally that was led by Paul George, who had 26 points.

George made a layup with 31 seconds left to give the Clippers a 101-100 lead for their first advantage since early in the third quarter. He added a 22-footer on their next offensive possession for a 103-102 lead.

But there was a lot more action left.

George—and 85% career free throw shooter—missed two free throws with 8.2 seconds remaining and the Suns had a chance to win, but it looked as if it wouldn't happen

Greinke, Astros beat Orioles 3-1 for 9th straight win



B A L T I -
M O R E

(AP)—Dusty Baker has been around long enough to know what it takes for a team to get on a lengthy winning streak.

After watching Zack Greinke stymie the Baltimore Orioles on Tuesday night for Houston's ninth straight victory, Baker was asked to explain the reason behind the Astros' most successful run since the 2019 season.

"We're getting good starting pitching," the longtime manager declared. "That's where it starts."

Greinke took a four-hitter into the eighth inning and Myles Straw had two RBIs in Houston's gritty 3-1 win. One night earlier, starter Jake Odorizzi pitched five hitless innings to spark a 10-2 rout of the lowly Orioles.

Greinke (8-2) allowed one run and five hits with four strikeouts and a walk over 7 1/3 innings. Facing the Orioles for the first time since 2010, the 37-year-old righty permitted only one runner past second base in lowering his ERA to 3.56.

The 18-year veteran attributed his solid outing to re-discovering his command of the fastball.

"It hasn't been that great," Greinke acknowledged. "I can't remember when it was good. It's been a while."

On this night, he was overpowering.

"The guy knows how to pitch," Orioles outfielder DJ Stewart said. "He's been getting outs and doing this for a long, long time. He keeps you off balance with fastball, curveball, changeup."

Brooks Raley got two strikeouts in the eighth and Ryan Pressly finished for his 11th save in 12 tries.

Straw hit a solo shot in the second inning and singled in the tiebreaking run in the seventh before Chas McCormick added a sacrifice fly in the eighth.

"He's using the whole field, he's turning on the ball," Baker said of Straw, the No. 8 hitter in the lineup. "We're just glad he's doing his thing. We need him, especially at the bottom of the order there."

Riding their longest streak since a 10-game run in May 2019, the Astros own the best record in the AL (45-28). Houston has won seven straight series after taking the first two of this three-game set.

Baltimore has lost 12 of 13 and owns the AL's worst record (23-50). Right-hander Jorge López (2-9) gave up two runs and five hits over 6 1/3 innings but was outdone by Greinke.

Straw put the Astros up 1-0 with his third home run in 432 career at-bats. The liner to left was initially ruled a double,



but the call was overturned after a replay showed the ball clearing the 7-foot wall — and the glove of leaping outfielder Austin Hays — before bouncing back onto the field.

Baltimore used a walk, a single and a fly ball by Cedric Mullins to tie it in the third.

López was lifted in the seventh after McCormick led off with an infield hit. Straw greeted Hunter Harvey with an opposite-field bloop to right that landed in front of a diving Stewart, and by the time the outfielder retrieved the ball and got it to the plate, McCormick had already scored.

Padres 3, Dodgers 2

In San Diego, Jake Cronenworth and Ha-Seong Kim homered off Clayton Kershaw and host San Diego held on to defeat Los Angeles.

It was the sixth consecutive win for the Padres, who are 6-3 against the defending National League West champs this season. Padres starter Blake Snell (3-3), who entered the game with a 5.72 ERA, shut out the Dodgers for five innings to earn the win. He allowed four hits and three walks while striking out five.

Kershaw gave up three runs on four hits and two walks over six innings.

Giants 5, Angels 0

In Anaheim, Calif., Anthony DeSclafani threw seven scoreless innings and got plenty of offensive support while leading San Francisco over Los Angeles.

The Giants had 12 hits, including home runs from Wilmer Flores and Mauricio Dubon. Brandon Crawford went 3-for-3 with a walk.

DeSclafani (8-2) allowed just three hits and two walks while striking out nine on the

way to winning his fourth consecutive start. He has allowed just four runs (three earned) in 27 innings during those outings, good for a 1.00 ERA.

Red Sox 9, Rays 5 (11 innings)

In St. Petersburg, Rafael Devers hit a tiebreaking two-run double in the 11th inning as visiting Boston spoiled the major league debut of Tampa Bay top prospect Wander Franco in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Franco, ranked as baseball's No. 1 prospect by MLB.com, hit a three-run homer for his first hit and finished 2-for-4 for the Rays, who have lost seven straight.

Hunter Renfroe hit a two-run homer and RBI single, Devers finished with three RBIs and J.D. Martinez added two RBIs for Boston, which has won five of seven.

Athletics 13, Rangers 6

In Arlington, Texas, Matt Chapman homered and drove in three runs as Oakland jumped out to a big lead before recording a victory over host Texas in Arlington.

Ramon Laureano also went deep among his three hits, and former Ranger Elvis Andrus and Mark Canha had two-run singles as part of their three-hit performances. Oakland provided insurance as Sean Murphy's two-run double highlighted a four-run ninth inning.

Eli White belted a two-out homer in the seventh inning and Joey Gallo went deep to lead off the eighth and trim Oakland's lead to 9-6. Texas, however, was unable to draw closer and sustained its 20th loss in the last 24 games.

Tigers 8, Cardinals 2

In Detroit, Jonathan Schoop

capped Detroit's six-run fourth-inning outburst with a three-run homer and the host Tigers defeated St. Louis.

Schoop's homer was his 14th this season and ninth this month. Jake Rogers had two extra-base hits and drove in three runs and Akil Badoo contributed two hits and scored twice.

Detroit starter Tarik Skubal gave up two runs on four hits in 4 2/3 innings. St. Louis starter Johan Oviedo (0-3) gave up six runs, two earned, on six hits in 3 2/3 innings. Paul DeJong reached base three times and scored a run, while Lars Nootbaar drove in a run in his major league debut.

Blue Jays 2, Marlins 1

In Miami, Lourdes Gurriel Jr. hit a go-ahead, run-scoring double in the top of the ninth inning, leading Toronto over host Miami.

Miami's Sandy Alcantara struck out seven in eight innings, allowing five hits, one walk and one run. He threw 55 of his 86 pitches for strikes as he lasted at least eight innings for the fourth time in his past six starts. He has a stellar 1.80 ERA over his past seven starts, although his record is just 3-3 during that span.

Jays starter Ross Stripling allowed just two hits, one walk and one run in six innings, striking out seven. Jays MVP candidate Vladimir Guerrero Jr. went 2-for-4 with one RBI.

Cubs 7, Indians 1

In Chicago, Kris Bryant, Willson Contreras and Patrick Wisdom homered as Chicago cruised to a win over visiting Cleveland.

Joc Pederson added a two-run double for the Cubs, who salvaged a split in the two-

AP
Myles Straw homered and drove in two runs while starter Zack Greinke threw 7 1/3 strong innings as the visiting Houston Astros extended their winning streak to nine.

game series. Chicago's seven-run outburst followed a string of nine straight games with three runs or fewer.

Cubs right-hander Kyle Hendricks (10-4) won his eighth consecutive start. He allowed no runs on four hits in six innings. Hendricks walked none and struck out five. Cleveland's Eli Morgan (0-2) gave up four runs on four hits in five-plus innings. He walked none and struck out nine.

Nationals 3, Phillies 2

In Philadelphia, Yan Gomes singled twice and drove in two runs and Juan Soto added two hits and scored twice as Washington defeated host Philadelphia.

Nationals starter Max Scherzer (6-4) tossed five solid innings and allowed two hits and one run. Scherzer, who had been struggling with a groin injury, struck out eight and walked three.

Bryce Harper homered and singled while Rhys Hoskins homered and doubled for the Phillies. Manager Joe Girardi was ejected after a fifth-inning spat with Scherzer. Girardi asked the umpires to check Scherzer for a foreign substance and, after nothing was found, Girardi was ejected.

Royals 6, Yankees 5

In New York, Kansas City scored four runs in the eighth inning and Greg Holland survived a jam in the ninth as the Royals hung on for a victory over New York at Yankee Stadium.

By scratching out a rally against Jonathan Loaisiga (7-3), the Royals won for the second time in 34 games when trailing after seven innings.

Kansas City's comeback occurred after the Yankees took a 3-2 lead when Wade scored on a wild pitch by Jake Brentz (2-0). Kyle Zimmer allowed a two-run homer to LeMahieu, and Scott Barlow stranded Aaron Judge at second in the eighth.

Pirates 6, White Sox 3

In Pittsburgh, Erik Gonzalez and Bryan Reynolds each drove in two runs as Pittsburgh handed visiting Chicago its fifth straight loss.

Adam Frazier added a solo

homer and walked and scored for the Pirates, who rode a four-run seventh inning to win for the third time in four games. Pittsburgh starter Tyler Anderson pitched 6 2/3 innings, allowing three runs and

five hits, with one walk and four strikeouts.

Yasmani Grandal hit a pinch-hit three-run homer for the White Sox, whose losing streak is their longest of the season. Chicago starter Lucas Giolito, making his first start against the Pirates since no-hitting them Aug. 25, gave up two runs and four hits in six innings, with two walks and seven strikeouts.

Braves 3, Mets 0

In New York, Charlie Morton pitched seven scoreless innings and earned his 100th career win as visiting Atlanta blanked New York.

All of the Atlanta offense came from Dansby Swanson, who connected for a three-run homer off reliever Yennsy Diaz in the third inning. It was his 12th home run of the year.

Morton (7-3) allowed only one hit, a high chopper from pinch hitter Jerad Eickhoff with two outs in the fifth inning. Morton extended his scoreless streak to 14 2/3 innings. He walked two batters, hit two with pitches and struck out a season-high 11.

Brewers 5, Diamondbacks 0

In Phoenix, Kolten Wong led off the game with a home run and Freddy Peralta tossed six strong innings as Milwaukee beat Arizona in Phoenix.

The Diamondbacks were held to two hits and lost for the 32nd time in their last 35 games. Arizona ended its franchise-record, 17-game losing streak with a 5-1 victory Monday in the series opener.

Peralta (7-2) allowed one hit and walked four while matching a season high with 10 strikeouts. Christian Yelich added a solo homer and Luis Urias drove in two runs for Milwaukee, which won for the third time in four games.

Reds 10, Twins 7

In Minneapolis, Tyler Naquin went 4-for-4, including a go-ahead three-run home run in the top of the ninth, as Cincinnati snapped a five-game losing streak in a wild victory over Minnesota in Minneapolis.

Naquin drove a 2-1 fastball by Twins reliever Hansel Robles (3-4) 420 feet into the back of the bullpen in left-center for his 12th home run of the season. Tucker Barnhart went 3-for-4 with a home run and three RBIs and Jesse Winker added a two-run double for Cincinnati.

Ryan Jeffers, Max Kepler and Trevor Larnach each homered and Nelson Cruz went 3-for-4 and was also hit by a pitch for Minnesota, which had its season-best five-game winning streak snapped.

Benavente wins SGA monthly ace

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Tony Benavente won the Saipan Golfers Association May 2021 Ace of the Month Tournament held last May 16 at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

He actually tied runner-up Rick Kautz with each golfer registering net scores of 71. Benavente, however, took the plum after beating the latter on a scorecard tiebreak.

Benavente finished with a gross score of 80 built around a front nine score of 43 and a back nine score of 37. Minus his 9 handicap, he came away with a net of 71.

Kautz, for his part, fired an 83 gross score. He started with a 41 in the first nine holes before improving with a 42 in the back nine. Minus his 12 handicap, Kautz arrived with net the score of 71.

Former national CNMI golf-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Participants of the Saipan Golfers Association May 2021 Ace of the Month Tournament pose for a group photo last May 16 at the Laolao Bay Golf & Resort.

er Nick Sablan completed the Top 3 with a net score of 72. He submitted a gross score of 81 after a 43 and a 38 in the front and back nines, respectively, for his net score of 72.

Benavente now joins SGA

late on not only these players but also coaches, clubs, family. I also appreciate Chelsea FC Hong Kong coaches led by Coach Luem Khen Koo for their continue guidance since our women's program started. I hope they continue to work hard and continue to play football in college and prove CNMI players can play in the college level and continue to inspire our young players," he said.

Located in Kings Point, New York, the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy Mariners hired Andy Commins as the first-ever head coach of the women's soccer program. Commins will oversee the new program as a club team over the next two years, recruiting top student-athletes from around the country to the Academy before the Mariners join the NCAA and Skyline Conference in the fall.

13.69 and 13.94, respectively.

Leanie DLG Acosta, meanwhile, ruled the girls 18-and-under after finishing the 100m in 14.14. Cassandra Cruz came in second in 14.39 with Bernalie Tina Dafrow completing the Top 3 in 17.21.

In the masters category, Rhonda Gross was first in the women's 40-and-over after completing the 100m in 16.74. Gregory Borja took the plum in the men's 45-and-over by finishing on 15.05, while Kosuke Sato added to his win in the 1,600m by topping the 50-and-over with a run of 13.94.

Results of the field events of the Track and Field Open Meet—javelin, shotput, and long jump—will be published in tomorrow's issue of the *Saipan Tribune*.

2021 Ace of the Month winners Das Krishnan (January), Joe

I. Sablan (February), Frances M. Sablan (March), and Kautz

(April) for the season-ending SGA Ace of Aces Tournament.

2023 Pacific Games host wants change of dates

The organizing committee for the 2023 Pacific Games in Honiara, Solomon Islands wants the start of the quadrennial event moved by four months to allow for the completion of the islands' sports facilities that was bogged down due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Pacific Games Council CEO Andrew Minogue said the Honiara 2023 Pacific Games Organizing Committee has requested a change of date from the original July 16-29, 2023 schedule to Nov. 19 to Dec. 2, 2023 so the island-nations can complete its sports infrastructure to enable it to host the Games successfully.

"Due to COVID-19 causing

inevitable delays to the commencement of the venue construction program in Honiara, the Games organizers have requested a change of dates...The PGC has been assured that the venue construction program, largely facilitated by the Chinese government, and which is underway, should be completed by mid-2023, but that allows no real time to test the venues and make them operational. Nor does it allow for contingencies in the event of further slippage in the construction program due to natural causes like heavy rains. These additional four months of prepara-



tion time will allow the venues to be fully completed and tested," Minogue wrote to member island-nations of the Pacific Games Council.

He added that before committing to these revised dates, the council is consulting with each of the Oceania federations to ascertain whether there are any significant clashes with their sport's international calendar at that time. "We would also like to receive feedback from PGAs."

The 2023 Pacific Games will feature 16 mandatory sports—athletics, basketball (3x3 and 5x5), boxing, football, golf, judo, outrigger canoe, rugby

7's, sailing, swimming, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, triathlon, volleyball (indoor and beach), and weightlifting. There are 21 optional sports and the events that will be added to the mandatory list will be decided when the Pacific Games Council holds a general assembly early 2023.

In related news, the Pacific Games Council re-opened the bid process for the 2027 Pacific Games with a renewed call for expressions of interest. Several expressions of interest were received in May, and a deadline for the submission of full bid proposals is this Friday, June 25. **(Mark Rabago)**

in the juniors age group and everyone who took part in the two-day event.

Team 5 made up of Jimin Woo, Sean Lee, and Isabel Heras topped the seniors division also over the weekend, amassing the same 4-0 win-loss record.

TEAM

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Team 5. Kang beat Nason Wessel, 6-4, to start their final match. Kadokura then outplayed Ki Won Lee, 6-1, while Kim was a 6-2 winner over Hoo Wang. In the men's dou-

bles, Kang and Kadokura prevailed after an exhausting 7-5 victory over Wessel and Lee before Kang and Kim closed the curtains on the tournament with a 6-3 victory over Wessel and Wang.

The Marianas Invitational Team Cup is the first time the



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Participants of the senior and junior divisions of the first-ever Marianas Invitational Team Cup pose for a group last weekend at the American Memorial Park.



Ayton soars for last second alley-oop, Suns beat Clippers

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Dela Cruz, Sapong win century dash



NMA

Cristobal "Leon" Dela Cruz leans in this shot at the finish line in the 100m of last Saturday's Northern Marianas Athletics' Track and Field Open Meet at the Oleai track and field.

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Cristobal "Leon" Dela Cruz and Zarinae Sapong were the fastest afoot in the century dash of Northern Marianas Athletics' Track and Field Open Meet last Saturday at the Oleai track and field.

Dela Cruz, who ran barefoot, nearly dove to the finish line to win the open division of the 100m race in a time of 12.65, while Sapong, a veteran

of many regional and international meets, topped the women's open in 13.42.

NMA secretary general Robin Sapong said there's no

coincidence that Dela Cruz and Sapong won the men's and women's 100m, as the two track stars practically train together.

He added that Dela Cruz is



the future of the CNMI's athletics program and at only 15 years old is already part of NMA's 18-and-under developmental squad. The Cha Cha Middle School student was also the 100m gold medalist in last season's Public School System All Schools Track and Field Champion-

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Podziewski to play soccer for Merchant Marine Academy

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Shirley's FC defender Lillian Podziewski earned a spot on the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy first-ever intercollegiate women's soccer team roster beginning this fall season.

The CNMI women's national team player and Mari-

anas High School graduate said her seeing action in the Mariners' first-ever soccer team is a culmination of her hard work on and off the pitch.

"If I were honest, I've had more downs than ups throughout my soccer journey. In my first few years of playing soccer I was always on the bench, even when I was one of the

only players who consistently went to training. I struggled and almost decided to quit soccer altogether until a friend noticed my 'fighting spirit' on the field and said I should try out for the national team. I didn't think I would make it, but I took the chance and tried out for the team, and I worked hard to improve. Since then, I met

new coaches and teammates who encouraged me and made me a better person and player," said Podziewski who left for New York this summer following her acceptance to the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy.

Podziewski, who graduated No. 4 in the Top 10 of her MHS class in May 28, 2021, said she wants to serve as an inspiration to the islands' youth that perseverance eventually pays off.

"I want to let the younger

**See PODZIEWSKI on
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NMIFA
Incoming U.S. Merchant Marine Academy soccer player Lillian Podziewski, right, poses with Northern Mariana Islands Football Association technical director Michiteru Mita.



Team 4 sweeps junior division

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Team 4 made up of Daniel Kang, Yutaka Kadokura, and Helen Kim bulldozed over the competition to win the junior division of the first-ever Marianas Invitational Team Cup last weekend at the American Memorial Park.

Kang and company started things off with a 5-0 sweep of Team 1. That head-to-head saw Kang get the better of June Yu in the first men's singles, 6-3. Kadokura then won in the same exact score against Si Woo Lee in the second men's singles, before Kim nearly blanked Savita Sikkel, 6-1, in the women's singles.

In the men's doubles, Kang and Kadokura teamed up to hold back Yu and Lee, 6-3. Kadokura and Kim then brought out the broomsticks after a 6-1 victory over Yu and Sikkel.

Team 4 escaped with the skin of their teeth against a battle-tested Team 2, 3-2. Kang got things rolling with a hard-fought 6-4 win over Wataru Kadokura. Yutaka, however, was dominated by

Simon Tang and lost 1-6. Good thing Kim shutout Anna Kwon, 6-0, to give favor back to Team 4.

In the men's doubles, Wataru and Tang made it 2-2 following a 7-6 (5) conquest of Kang and Yutaka that set up the crucial mixed doubles. Kang and Kim eventually pulled out the victory, preserving Team 4's spotless record in matches with a 6-4 triumph over Wataru and Kwon.

Against Team 3, Kang and company got their second wind and also registered a 5-0 victory. Kang and Kadokura started fast and both zeroed Cody Shimizu and Eamon Tang in their respective men's singles matches. Kim then nearly swept Irin Chung, 6-1, before Kang and Kadokura took the men's doubles with a nip-and-tuck 7-5 win. Kang and Kim then formalized things with a 6-2 victory over Shimizu and Chung.

Team 4 completed a 4-0 sweep of their assignments following a 5-0 conquest of

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, Daniel Kang, Yutaka Kadokura, and Helen Kim pose with their championship medals after winning the junior division of the first-ever Marianas Invitational Team Cup last weekend at the American Memorial Park.